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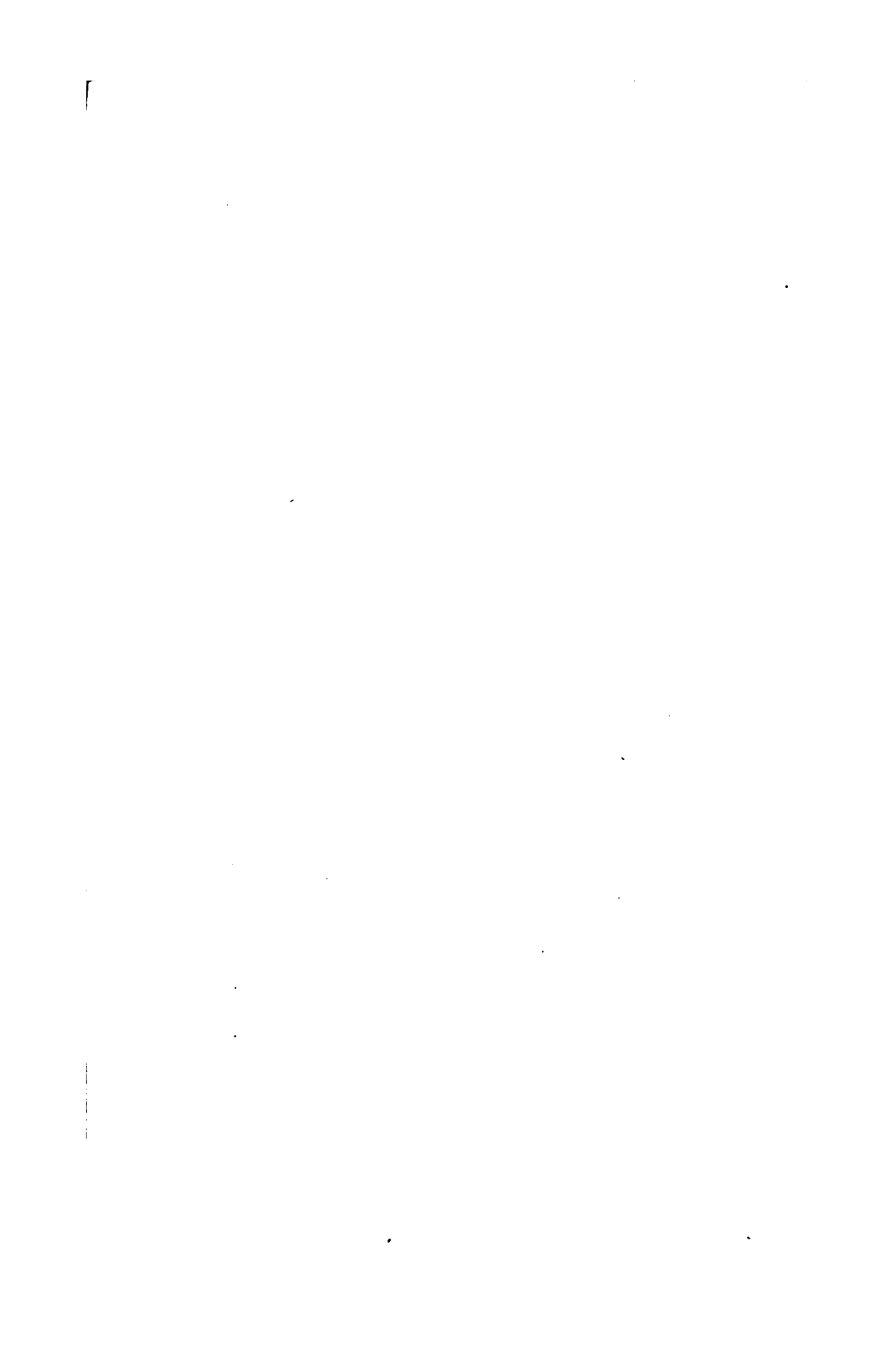
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JESUIT · EXECUTORSHIP.

VOL. II.



JESUIT EXECUTORSHIP:
OR,
PASSAGES IN THE LIFE
OF
A SECEDER FROM ROMANISM.

An Autobiography.

The net has fallen upon me; I shall perish
Under device and practice.
SHAKESPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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JESUIT EXECUTORSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

Heretics and schismatics, and rebels to our said lord (the pope) and his successors, I will, to my utmost power, persecute and attack.—*Oath taken by Roman-catholic Bishops.*

ON the 24th of May, 1824, while the funeral obsequies were being performed, and the remains of Mr. Fitzgerald consigned to the silent vault where his ancestors lay, I gathered my five children round me in my own room. As I viewed their sweet but helpless infant forms, the eldest not having attained her sixth year, and felt that I was now their sole dependence on earth, I could not but be alive to the solemnity of the charge. But reflection told me there were thousands of widowed mothers in the world, on whom such a charge must fall still more heavily than on me. In losing my husband I had not lost a companion or an adviser—I had been accustomed to live even without his sympathy, or any of those tender cares which form part of the dues of a wife. But the father of a family, even under the most negative aspects of his character, is

still a heavy loss, where his children are young, and incapable of acting for themselves; and the widowed mother, if not secured by legal provision in the possession of her accustomed competency, becomes, from the moment of her husband's death, an alien not only from comfort, but from family connexions, and is at once obliterated from her former circle in society.

I had every reason in my own case to suppose that I was left in full power to protect my children, and sustain with them my own position in life; and although I could not but be aware that the personal property of Fitzgerald might be swallowed up in payment of his accumulated personal debts, I believed his estates to be free from encumbrance. The ignorance in which I had always been kept of his pecuniary affairs had never appeared to me as an evil, but now I perceived for the first time the inconvenience and danger of it. Accustomed from my childhood to receive, without toil or thought, a continuous supply of every want, it was not until within a few months that I had discerned, even partially, the value of money. It had always been to me like a weed of earth, ever springing up and within reach whenever my hand chose to gather it.

Recent experience had somewhat disturbed this security, and laden me with a new care. Still I was very far from estimating the importance of that all pervading ingredient of the social structure, without which, as society is at present constituted, the whole

machinery of life falls to pieces ; and money is, no doubt on that account, often mistaken for the supreme good.

On the return of the funeral party, I was summoned, in the name of the Jesuit, to attend the reading of my 'late husband's will.'

As I knew no more of *any* will than what I have already related to my reader, I was struck with surprise and inexpressible apprehension by this message, but I instantly obeyed the summons, and joined the assembled auditors in an adjoining drawing-room. It did not occupy many minutes to apprise me, that the whole of our family property was placed in the hands of the two priests who attended my husband in his last moments, and who now assumed the office of whole and sole executors to his will. Everything was left at their disposal, except the landed property inherited by my son, to whom they were appointed sole guardians during his minority, as well as trustees to his estates.

Not the slightest mention of myself, except in speaking of my *jointure*, or of my four girls, or of any provision for their subsistence, had been made in any part of this extraordinary document.

Several of my husband's distant relatives were present, who had a right to expect some recognition in such a deed. But it was unusually succinct where it should have been diffuse, and the powers of the executors were so ostentatiously stated as to fill

its pages, and leave those who ought to have been most interested in it without any part to perform, but that of silently listening to its provisions.

All authority had been vested in the two priests, but how it had been done, and by whom, none would now ever know, until the day when the secrets of all human life shall be revealed.

Unable to sustain in the presence of others the shock which the reading of this document had inflicted on me, I was assisted out of the room, and left, at my own earnest request, alone, to endure as I best might that view of the future which now forced itself on my unprepared mind. The disrespect to myself implied in the conditions of the will, and in the choice of its executors, was only a secondary consideration to me. Those prophetic words of the departed, 'You will fall into the grasp of the priests,' uttered in such seeming agony, were already fulfilled by the provisions of his own will. When I had taken a review of all that had so recently passed on this subject, while my husband lay on the bed of death, and now beheld the result, it was impossible to believe otherwise, than that some deep artifices had been employed to produce it. And discerning, as I could not fail to do, the state of pecuniary embarrassment in which I might be placed by being left entirely dependent on the will of the executors, it seemed to me that I was inextricably in the toils of that priestly power so dreaded by the deceased, and which, consistently

with itself, could not fail to persecute me to the latest moment of my life.

My darling boy, as heir to the patrimonial estates, would of course be suitably provided for ; but for my four infant daughters, I should be dependent on the Jesuit-executor for whatever he might deign to award me for their use.

Of him I speak as though the whole testamentary power were comprised in him ; the parish priest being a mere man of straw, probably associated with the Jesuit only to divide with him whatever odium might arise from the exercise of the extraordinary powers delegated to them jointly.

While occupied in these reflections, I recollected the jewelled purse, which Fitzgerald, when giving it to me, had desired me instantly to secure, but which, in the momentous occurrences which immediately succeeded this injunction, had entirely escaped my memory. It was not, perhaps, yet too late, and I went at once to get the key of the desk, and to obtain possession of this valuable gift. Valuable indeed it would have been to me at that moment, as I was then almost without money.

I found the key, and hastened to the library, where the desk was always kept, only to learn that I had no power to open it ! It was already under the executors' seal. I stood like one petrified, so filled with self-reproach for my neglect, and so lost to everything around me, that I did not observe there

was another person in the room, until the fall of a book caused me to turn my head.

As I did so, the face of the Jesuit presented itself, and his eyes met mine, with an expression that neutralized the softness of his placid smile.

I appealed to him at once respecting the desk, which I said I meant to appropriate, as containing my husband's private papers, and, therefore, belonging exclusively to myself. He replied, with an air of authority, that such an appropriation could not be admitted, as the executors would require possession of all manuscripts left by the deceased, in aid of their official duties

'At any rate,' said I, 'there is an article in the desk which was given me by my husband, but a short time before his death, and which I have allowed to remain there until this moment. I had, indeed, forgotten it; but as it is not a manuscript, it cannot be wanted for the purpose you have mentioned.'

The Jesuit then inquired the nature of it; and, when informed, remarked that an article of that kind was so essentially a part of the personals of the estate, that it would be impossible for the executors to relinquish their right to dispose of it.

I must have betrayed extraordinary emotion as this decision was pronounced, for the Jesuit stepped hastily towards me, with extended arms, as if he would have saved me from falling. He stopped short, however, as I waved him off with my hand.

‘I am sorry, madam,’ said he, ‘to oppose your wishes, at my very entrance on the painful duties I have allowed myself to assume, at the earnest request of a dying man. But, how much soever I might be disposed to place myself under *your* guidance, I could not, as *one* only of the executors, comply with your wishes on the point in question, without the aid of my coadjutor, especially as I know what the *duty* of the case must be.’

‘Father Rénel,’ said I, with some warmth, ‘you allude to the testamentary duties you have arrogated, as though you had assumed them from compassion to the dying. Pray let me implore the extension of that sentiment to the living, by allowing me the perusal and examination of a document so important to myself and family as my husband’s will.’

The Jesuit quietly replied, ‘If, madam, you had been a party to your husband’s will, I could not have refused your request; as you are not, you must not take it amiss that I decline to expose it to your cavils.’

He then bowed low, with an air of solemn mockery, and moving slowly, left the room.

As the door closed after him I was again alone, and at liberty to resume my gloomy forebodings. The gauntlet had now certainly been thrown down; and hostilities actually commenced between the Jesuit and me. Had I done right in yielding to the impetuous feelings inspired by the wrongs inflicted on

me? To what purpose would be my resistance to a power above law, above conscience, above public opinion, except to destroy myself and family?

Far better would it be for me meekly to sit down under evils so irremediable, than to resist them. But my children — how should I answer it hereafter to them, if I suffered all their rights to be forfeited without a single effort to redeem them. ‘I will write at once,’ said I, ‘to my uncle, Sir Felix; he is a lawyer, and he, I am sure, will help me.’

I wrote to him under this impulse without the loss of an hour.

Meanwhile, I endeavoured to make an estimate of my pecuniary resources, or rather, what I supposed them to be, independently of the will.

The annual income arising from my jointure I had always understood as amounting, jointly with my uncle’s settlement, to five hundred pounds. A miserable pittance, certainly, for five persons! I attempted in vain, by calculation, to apply it so as to cover our wants.

Another difficulty arose in regard to my jointure, viz., my ignorance of the manner in which it had been secured to me.

During my married life I had never heard the subject mentioned, nor did I now know where to apply for its periodical payments. But as it had been alluded to in the will, it was of course secure; and our man of business would be able to furnish

me with such information as I might require respecting it.

By the reading of the will, my comparatively destitute situation had become known to the funeral guests. They were so numerous as almost to fill my spacious mansion ; for the popularity of my husband during the better part of his life, and until very lately, had been unbounded in his province. These now precipitately departed, like persons fleeing from a falling house.

In a few hours I was alone. My position on that day formed an epoch in my life. I soon found myself plunging into meditations which were maddening ; and, to divert the course of my thoughts, ran wildly about my deserted house, so lately filled with *friends*, to search for some one who might have remained behind. But I gazed only on desolation. The whole fabric around me, no longer sustained by the golden cement that had hitherto held it together, and which was indispensable to its existence, seemed tumbling to pieces ; and could I as easily have run away from it as my late *friends* had done, I should have followed their example in that moment of despair. In endeavouring to flee from myself, I visited chambers and recesses in every part of the house, some of which I had never seen before. The servants, acting under relaxed authority, were moving idly about, or lounging at every turn. They retired before me, frightened at my unexpected ap-

pearance, or touched by my visible distraction, while I continued my perambulation until I came to a small room near to my own apartments, which I was accustomed to call my boudoir. This room was my *oratory*—my *confessional*, where I was wont to pour out my heart to God—my *sanctuary*, in which I vented my domestic sorrows—my reading-room, in which I sometimes, but not often, wrapped myself up in the dreams of poets, or in those of my own fancy, and to which I brought my children occasionally, that I might have them all to myself.

The door of my boudoir, as I reached it, was ajar, and I entered it abruptly at this moment, supposing it unoccupied, to seek for peace in prayer.

My disordered air startled a venerable form which I found there, reposing in an arm chair. It was Father Ossory. I had then at last found one friend, whom my sudden destitution had not driven from my walls.

‘Pardon me,’ said he, as I advanced towards him, ‘that I am so slow in rising to apologize to you, my good friend, for my being in an apartment which I know is sacred. But in the distraction occasioned by the sudden departure of your guests, I came here to get out of their way, until I could take leave of you after they were gone. I will now retire, and await your leisure in another room.’

It is necessary that I here apprise my reader that Father Ossory (for I have never called him by any

other name) had two years since, at more than eighty years of age, publicly renounced Romanism, and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church. Of course, he had lost caste by this renunciation, and had been ejected from every circle in which he had formerly moved. But he had counted the cost beforehand; and although, with a heart still capable of attachment, he could not but feel such a wrench from the associates of his earlier years, yet in a cause like this he considered whatever he had lost as mere dross, in comparison with what he had gained. His income, also, was of course lost to him, and every other source of official gain, and he had since lived on an annuity of twenty pounds, which formed all the property he now possessed, so that he was in poverty as well as in isolation, enduring daily that species of persecution which, in such a locality as his, could not fail to pursue any man who had renounced the errors of the Romish Church. He resided in a very small, but neat cabin, not far from Beech Park, and had, since his conversion, been a frequent visitor to me, and a friend and spiritual adviser, ever ready to serve me. The meeting him at this moment, now the only friend that remained to counsel and support me under the violent shock I had received, was an unspeakable comfort to me.

At my entreaty, he resumed his seat, and patiently waited, as he had sometimes done in former times, until my bursting heart had relieved itself in tears. When I was capable of listening to him, he opened

the holy book which lay before him, and in which, previous to my entrance, he had been marking passages for my perusal ; and now read them aloud, page after page, until he had drawn my thoughts from the irritating circumstances of my position, and enabled me to resume some command over my feelings.

‘ Oh, this blessed book,’ said he, as he closed it. ‘ Time has been when I knew it not, and when I withheld it from you, my young friend. What would you now do without it ? Forgive me the errors of my former advice, and my more than erroneous attempts at instruction ; I can never forgive myself. At some future time, if it please God, I will give you the history of my mind in latter years, and show you the infinite prize I have gained in a knowledge of the true God.’

As I began to weep afresh, he said, ‘ And you, my friend, are you not also in possession of the same treasure ? Even your afflictions, your losses at this time, are but working out for you that future happiness for which you hope, and for which, if an option were given you, you would willingly suffer the loss of all things. You believe in God ; believe also in his power and mercy.

‘ The clouds that hang over you are menacing, but he can disperse them ; or if, for your benefit, it be his purpose to permit the storm to fall on you, he will sustain you under it. ‘ Only believe,’ says our blessed Saviour ; ‘ all things are possible to him that be-

lieveth.' Bear this great truth in mind, my afflicted friend, and supplicate for faith, as the principle above all others that unites you with Omnipotence, and enables you to overcome the world. I now leave you; but I am within call whenever I can be useful to you, and only too happy to be allowed to serve you.'

As the venerable man departed, and the sacred words he had uttered still rested on my ear, I could not but contemplate with wonder and admiration the difference betwixt his present views and those of former times, when the cabalistic agency of 'the Virgin,' formed the chief theme of his discourse, and aves and beads were his sole medicine for a mind diseased.

CHAPTER II.

Heretics when strong, are to be committed to God; when *weak*, to the executioner.—CARDINAL BELLARMINE.

WHILE awaiting my uncle Sir Felix's reply to my application to him, the Jesuit, one morning, about a week after the funeral, sent to request that I would appoint a time when he might have an interview with me, on important business.

I replied, that I was at leisure to receive him immediately; and when I had learnt that he was coming, I sent for my little son to be with me during his stay.

The Jesuit entered my room with an air of seeming depression, and great meekness of demeanour, which was so striking, that I began to think I had misjudged him.

How seductive, how omnipotent is manner! He who can command this, is in possession of 'a key to unlock hearts.'

The *humble* man remained standing, even after I had begged him to sit. He opened his mission with a suavity of look and language that suggested so

strongly the idea of benignity, as to stagger, and almost disarm me.

He deplored, in choice and flattering terms, that perversity of fate, which in his intercourse with me restricted him to speak only on one subject, which he feared might be painful to me.

In the course of his official duties as executor to the will, he said, he had found it necessary to inquire into the amount and sources of my future personal income. 'You are aware,' said he, 'that there is no provision made for you by your husband, in addition to the jointure settled on you at your marriage, and I am sorry to inform you, that the property (which was personal) on which that settlement was made, has in great part disappeared. In consequence of this, your original income is now so much reduced as scarcely to amount to a hundred per annum. Perhaps you have been some time aware of this?'

I could make no reply, for the shock was so great that I felt myself fast falling into utter incapacity; but the hand of my child was in mine, and the comfort of that little hand, at that moment, enabled me to retain my senses.

The Jesuit had paused for an instant, but he now resumed his discourse.

'Of the settlement made by your uncle, I have a still worse account to give, *that* having been cancelled by the donor himself, immediately on your apostatizing from the church of your fathers. Mr.

Fitzgerald was not a man of strict business habits, I find, on looking into his affairs; and having omitted to see that your uncle the bishop signed the deed at the time of your marriage, he had left it in his lordship's power to cancel it, as he had afterwards done, and for the reason which I have specified.

‘The landed property, you will be happy, madam, to learn, is so little encumbered, that it is likely to produce an annual income of from nine to ten thousand pounds. Of course, this amount will not be required for the use of your son at present. It will therefore be set aside—except what may be expended in masses for the soul of the deceased—to accumulate until your son attain his majority. Meantime, I am sorry to say, we find pressing debts lying against the estate, which require to be paid as speedily as possible. There is, however, no personal property in existence. It has all been spent without being accounted for, except an extensive stud, and the costly collections of *virtu*, pictures, works of art, furniture, plate, and other valuables, with which the house is stocked, and which may possibly cover the debts of the deceased, if well sold. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to put an immediate end to the expenses of your extensive establishment. In doing this, we shall be under the necessity of requesting you to withdraw with your family to another residence; and as the reduced state of your income, without any other consideration, renders such a step

necessary, you will perhaps, madam, not be disposed to regret or postpone the change.

‘The debts of honour incurred by the deceased at the gaming-table, and which have already been presented with an air of demand, as though they could legally be sustained, we have decided on repudiating. I trust, madam, your sense of honour on this point is not so nice as to require us to revise our resolution.’

The great calamities of life, like the thunderbolt or the avalanche, provoke no resistance. Their mission is fulfilled, and their work of destruction completed, too rapidly to admit of reaction. Even when the first shock is over, and consciousness breaks upon us of our having been, as it were, hurled into another planet, or thrown to the mercy of an element opposed to the very principles of our existence, we attempt not to extricate ourselves, but sink quietly down into ruin.

Such were my feelings, as the Jesuit wound up his narrative of torture with words of mockery. I lifted my child to my arms, and pressed him to my cold and almost lifeless bosom; while his soft caresses, and the entwining of his little arms around me, brought tears that for the moment saved me, and enabled me articulately to say, ‘I presume, Father Rénel, that your business with me is ended; or have you anything further to communicate which it is necessary for me to know?’

‘You are right, madam,’ said the Jesuit, ‘in not shrinking from what still remains to be told you. The provisions of the will do not permit my colleague and myself to interfere at all in your pecuniary arrangements for yourself and daughters. I cannot, therefore, trouble you with any proposal or suggestion respecting them. But as it is a part of our official duty to make some immediate provision for your son, we propose, if you are willing to take charge of him for the present, to place him with you, and to allow you at the rate of twenty pounds per annum for him. Will this satisfy you, madam?’

Insulted beyond measure at the manner and meaning of this proposal, from him who had already denuded me of everything, under pretence of executing my husband’s will, I could find no words of sufficient import to reply to him; and he resumed his discourse.

‘You will not long,’ said he, ‘be burdened with this duty, as it was not the will of the testator that his son should be reared in heresy. We are therefore instructed to remove him from you on his attaining his fifth year, and to place him in some Catholic college, either foreign or domestic, in which, if he live, he may receive a training adapted to his future position in life.’

I know not what more the Jesuit said. I remember only that, feeling my brain as it were on fire, I darted towards the handle of a bell that hung near

me, and pulled it violently. In a moment I was in the arms of my own maid; and, as I was afterwards told, in a delirium that continued for several hours.

I had braced myself under the previous inflictions of the Jesuit, determined not to give way; but when the climax came, and the very child in my arms—my own child—was rent from me, as my property had been, by his sacrilegious hand, my self-control utterly forsook me.

When reason returned, I found several letters on my table, in reply to some which I had written when I first became acquainted with the tenour of the will. They were, in general, tenderly expressed, for I had addressed only those persons whom I supposed to be real friends. But they all declined to interfere in my affairs, seeing they were in the hands of the Romish church. Even my uncle, Sir Felix Mulgrave, my father's brother, and the inheritor of his estates, though a barrister of high standing in London, and of course skilled in law, recoiled at the idea of catechizing a Jesuit, lest he might bring on himself the maledictions of his church.

As I was scarcely convalescent when I attempted the perusal of these letters, their contents threw me into a state of hopelessness and helplessness as adverse to my interests as to my peace of mind. Father Ossory, who spent some part of every day with me, by constantly speaking of the lofty themes which filled his own soul, and reminding me of Him 'who

bore our griefs and carried our sorrows,' and who had invited the 'heavy laden' to cast their burdens on Him, kept me alive to a perception of those divine realities, and thus moderated my distress. The frequent contemplation of them enabled me to regain that confidence in God, of which an excessive worldly care was defrauding my soul, and perilling even its salvation.

I became resigned, and comparatively tranquil. It was, indeed, high time that I should be so, for the new duties that awaited me were every day accumulating.

Bereft as I was, on all sides, of every earthly friend, and literally alone in the world, with a family of children dependent on me for support, and possessing only a beggarly income totally insufficient to their wants, I felt it an imperative necessity that I should make a last effort to avert or diminish the wrongs that had been perpetrated on me. Of the possible fruitlessness of my efforts I was fully aware; but, borrowing courage from despair, I resolved on remonstrating with my adversary, not only on the barbarity of his robberies, but on the absence of all precedent in the ordinary conduct of executors for outrages so revolting both to justice and humanity.

That I might not be betrayed into any expression which from its strength or bitterness should injure my cause, I decided on making my appeal by letter. Having done so, I awaited, with a throbbing heart, the result.

Four days elapsed before my missive was acknowledged, when I received a message from the Jesuit, saying it was indispensable that he should have an immediate interview with me. Of course this message was a mandate.

The ignorance in which women are left of all business matters, is an egregious error in their bringing up; and often fatal to themselves and families, when left in widowhood. Ignorant as I was myself of these things, it was necessary that I should endeavour to obtain some degree of information, respecting the amount and position of the family property, that I might be armed for the coming interview with the Jesuit.

To this end I sent for my late husband's man of business, Mr. Keogh.

I had often heard Mr. Fitzgerald speak of him as an acute and diligent man of business, and his deportment was that of a respectful, though, perhaps, too obsequious an adviser. Knowing how thoroughly he was acquainted with my husband's affairs, I determined on stating my whole case to him.

I had some difficulty in obtaining an appointment from him. When he at last appeared, his whole demeanour was so altered from what it had formerly been, that I was on the point of dismissing him abruptly, without explanation.

Ah! how much I had then to learn of what my own deportment and views should be, in order to adapt myself to my new position in life!

When I began to speak to Keogh of my affairs, instead of paying that deferential attention to a client's voice which had been usual with him, his eyes wandered about my apartment, from one object to another, until he at length rose from his seat, while I was speaking to him, to handle and admire a monthly-rose tree, that was blooming in one of its windows.

At this moment I ceased speaking ; and when he turned towards me, as if expecting me to go on, I said to him—‘ Mr. Keogh, you do not seem interested in my affairs.’

He replied, with the greatest familiarity and non-chalance—‘ Bless you, my dear lady, I am always interested where I think I can be of use ; but I fear your case is one in which I cannot act to any purpose ; especially as Father Rénel, one of your late husband's executors, has desired me to reserve myself for him ; and having put a handsome fee into my hand, you see I could not so well act for you, unless you could, as I may say, buy him out.

‘ I speak plainly, dear lady, as I really wish you well ; and I do not forget how many years I acted for Mr. Fitzgerald, who was a generous client to me while he lived. It is unfortunate for your interests ma'am, that by turning Protestant you have placed yourself in hostility with the church.’

After a few more words of strained civility, he abruptly took leave ; and thus ended all my hopes of assistance from him.

I had now only to receive the Jesuit, and to cast myself on the chances of another interview with him.

Father Rénel, as he entered my room, exhibited striking proofs that his toilet had been more than usually attended to. It would, nevertheless, have been lost on me, had not his air and manner assumed so new a character as to arrest my attention. His fine person and commanding features, not now disfigured by the visible assumption of an artificial humility, which they ordinarily bore, suggested the idea of his appearing in a new guise.

He looked grave, and would have looked benevolent, but that a countenance with a *Mephistophiles* cast in it, aims in vain at this expression.

Completely broken down, and suffering under every species of humiliation, I nevertheless felt my pulses quicken and my indignation kindle at sight of him.

As he seated himself, he fixed his eyes, the expression of which changed every moment, both on me and the child in my lap, so as to revolt and appal me, and cause me to cling to my infant for support.

After sitting a few seconds in silence, he bent his head towards me, and in a low, deep tone, inquired if we were alone.

‘Certainly, Father Rénel ; but if you are in want of anything, I am near the bell, and can ring it without rising?’

‘I want nothing, madam, but yourself—no ear but

your own—and what I am about to say to you requires not only your closest, but your most dispassionate attention.

This exordium was so extraordinary, that as the Jesuit uttered it, I was thankful I had placed my maid, who would fly to me at the first touch of the bell, in an adjoining room.

The Jesuit proceeded—‘I regret, madam, with poignant feelings, the pain which, from the tenour of the letter I have received from you, I must have inflicted on you in a recent interview, by too abrupt a disclosure of the barbarous requirements of a will, which I have, unfortunately for myself, undertaken to execute. But courageous and admirable as I had always found you, I ——’

‘Pardon me, father,’ said I, hastily and imprudently interrupting him, ‘I cannot allow myself to receive compliments from you, neither can I listen to reproaches aimed at the dead. The will in question, though attributed to my husband, I have the strongest reason for believing was neither dictated nor consented to by him.’

I threw out this observation at random, on the faith of what my husband had said with his dying breath, and, though frightened at my own temerity, hoped it might strike. But the priest heard it without allowing a muscle of his face to be moved, merely saying—

‘I am unpractised in bandying either compliments

or reproaches, madam. But had I not supposed you superior to the ordinary weakness of your sex, I might have been more cautious, though I dared not have been less frank, in my official statements. It must be remembered, too, that there are duties so absorbing as to preclude foresight, and dangers so appalling as only to be averted by fearlessness. But I must not forget that my object in coming here is primarily to reply to your letter.

‘ You express yourself, madam, as aggrieved by the conditions of your husband’s will, for which, of course, I cannot be responsible. You should distinguish betwixt the will, and the executors of it ; instead of which, you direct your reproaches and resentments against me, as though I were acting alone, in execution of a document which I had myself dictated. There are, however, conditions annexed to the fulfilment of your husband’s will, of which it is time I should apprise you, as they in some measure change the character of it, by placing in your own hands an optional power, capable of annulling its whole provisions.

‘ Your husband well knew, for he was a true son of the church, the powers of that church, and, in making his will, invested his executors with a discretionary power, which, under the church’s sanction, is to be used for your benefit.

‘ Thus, an invisible, but all-powerful hand, that can restore to you all which you deplore as lost, waits

to be gracious to you. Your vanished wealth, your lost position, your numerous friends, your beloved children, are all placed within your reach, by the fulfilment of a single condition.'

I raised my eyes to the face of the speaker, doubting if I heard aright. He saw my surprised and sceptical look, and replied to it.

'Yes, incredulous you may well be, of so much mercy, where none could have been expected. In apostatizing from the holy church, you forgot the God of your fathers, and he has now forgotten you. You have set yourself adrift on the ocean of Protestant heresy, and its waves are bearing you to speedy destruction. Disunited from the *visible* communion of the church on earth, you are consequently disunited from the *invisible* communion of the Holy Mother, from that of the saints and angels in heaven, and from God himself.

'Does no touch of pity for yourself agitate your heart, as the foaming billows roll over you? Or, madly and falsely heroic, are you determined on spiritual suicide? Helen Mulgrave! What magic still lingers round that name, and even now awakes enthusiasm! Child of the holy Catholic church! endowed, even to prodigality, with talent, with beauty, with grace, and attractions of every kind, to render you worthy of the name you bore, and of the glorious church which developed such powers, and which is still willing to call you her own, and re-purchase for you

an inheritance amongst the great and the mighty, both in earth and heaven.—’

I was about to impugn flattery so insulting, and to break up the conference, but the Jesuit continued, with a vehemence which seemed determined to sweep everything before it,—‘ I implore you to stay your course—to pause—to kneel—and to confess your sins! Authorized to act as your deliverer and confessor, I should listen to the outpourings of your heart with a depth of sympathy that would divide with you your guilt. You have a confessional in this house. Appoint a time when I may meet you there, and see you assume again the transforming duty of that sacred place. Bestow this one boon on yourself and me, whose duty it is to attempt all things, and endure all things, in bringing back such a wanderer from the church’s fold, to place her once more within its saving pale.’

Father Rénel here ceased speaking.

The mystery of my persecution was now unveiled. Why inquire further ?

It was not Father Rénel who was my adversary: it was the Romish church itself, whose inquisitorial powers, neither deterred by my insignificance, nor revolted by the odium of its task, had stooped to take cognizance of a female in private life, and direct a siege of extermination against her, solely for having dared to renounce Popery, and embrace Protestantism! This was the sum total of her offence, and in wreaking its vengeance on her for that offence, the Romish

church, calling itself christian, would compass sea and land to force her back to its authority, or otherwise accomplish her destruction.

As the Jesuit paused, looking intensely but artificially earnest, as though he had staked everything on a single throw, I turned from his scrutinizing gaze, to arrange my thoughts, and muster courage for the reply he awaited.

God and mammon had been distinctly placed before me in the balance. Hence my course became happily clear, although a prescience of the fearful future rose like a gaunt monster to my imagination, showing up the appalling destitution to which I was consigning myself, and those dearer to me than life. I tried my voice several times before I was able, audibly, to say—‘Father Rénel, I will not affect to misunderstand you, nor will I sarcastically thank the church for its parental solicitude on my behalf. The purpose of your mission is too obvious to be mistaken. You would restore to me the whole property of which you have robbed me, on a single condition—namely, that I should meet you in the confessional of the Romish church, and there renounce that Protestant faith which I have deliberately embraced on conviction. Is it not so?’

He bent his head, saying, ‘For argument’s sake, I admit your statement.’

‘You are, then, the avowed master of my fate ! I attempt not, at this moment, to penetrate the

mystery which has made you so. I am aware that your vocation exempts you from responsibility, in whatever you may dare to attempt in the service of your church, and that you hold yourself accountable neither to God nor man, but only to the hierarchy you serve. I do not, therefore, suspect you of personal malice to me or mine in what you have done, and are still doing, for the destruction of my devoted family. I only recognise in it a practical illustration of the spirit and morals of the Romish church, and the principles on which it is founded.

‘But I did not renounce Popery without consideration; neither did I adopt Protestantism without examination. I am, therefore, by God’s mercy, steadfast in adhering to it, and totally unprepared to accept your ‘thirty pieces of silver,’ for a betrayal of that faith on which I found my hopes of everlasting life.

‘You are a man of understanding, Father Rénel, and will not infer from this that I am insensible to the value of that wealth of which I have been despoiled.

‘Reared in the lap of luxury, and ignorant of the expedients of want, I am bewildered and lost, as I contemplate the dreary waste to which you are consigning me; and, without faith in God, I should, perhaps, when I look at my children, be tempted, in view of it, to barter everything for the retention of what you are taking from me. But when the

inspired volume which the Romish church withholds, and the God whom that volume reveals, are to be exchanged for Popery, the boon you offer for this sacrifice becomes 'unrighteous mammon,' and is, in comparison, less to me than 'a drop of the bucket,' or 'the small dust of the balance.'

As I ceased speaking, the Jesuit quickly rose, and, crossing the room to obtain his hat, stood with it in his hand before me.

'Madam,' said he, 'I take my leave; for although, as one who is devoted to the welfare of your soul, I could linger ever here, and kneel but to kiss the hem of your garment, your impenitency makes it my duty to withhold any further remonstrance or exhortation. If, on reflection, you should relent, remember that nothing short of the cleansing power of the *confessional* could restore you to the good offices of the church, or reinstate you in your relations with it. The ecclesiastical sentence* that hangs over you is yet unpronounced; but, whenever it may fall on your devoted head, it will sink you in endless perdition.'

These words of doom were uttered in solemn and vengeful tones. But in a moment the placid smile returned, and, bowing low, the Jesuit retired.

I will not conceal from my reader that my nerves were completely shaken by this last menace of the

* Note 10.

Jesuit. The truth, or the error, which we are taught in childhood, is long-abiding, and savours of immortality. The grossest delusions, and the most irrational opinions, impressed on the ductile nature of infancy, sink deep into it, and incorporate themselves with its very life.

I had passed through years of reading and reasoning, before I felt the fetters of Popery loose their grasp on my imagination ; and up to the very time of which I write, the mysterious powers of the spiritual world, as delegated to the Romish priesthood, and exercised by them on their dupes and victims, would still in hours of sleep or weakness, haunt and terrify me.

The decision which I had just expressed to the Jesuit, on the base barter proposed by him, although perhaps too hastily pronounced, I could not regret, even on reflection ; and in full view of the consequences which must ensue from it, I could but cast myself on the mercy of God.

CHAPTER III.

'My soul is weary of my life. . . . I will speak in the bitterness of my soul, I will say unto God, Do not condemn me ; show me wherefore thou contendest with me.'—JOB.

AS the ejection from Beech Park seemed to have become inevitable, in conformity with the will of the destroyer, I attempted to realize and prepare myself for it.

Yet I still lingered and looked back, now to one quarter, and then to another, for 'help against the mighty.' But in scanning the circle of my near relatives, whom death had spared, (that once happy family, on which formerly the sun never rose but to bless them,) I could not find one of whom I could ask assistance.

My dear mother, and my younger sister Caroline, were living with my uncle, the Baron de Wallenstein, at Vienna, but not in circumstances to relieve me in any way ; being less happy in their connexion with him than at first, owing, perhaps, to their almost entire dependence on him.

The property that had been left to them by my late uncle the bishop, had, either through mismanage-

ment or embezzlement, never reached them. They had therefore nothing which they could call their own, except my mother's small hereditary income, which was scarcely sufficient to defray their personal expenses, in the high society with which they mingled in the baron's house.

My sister Dora was far too distant for regular correspondence, and therefore knew but little of my position since my marriage. She had long been married to Sir Lucius Mac Neil, whom she had been instrumental in converting from Romanism ; and who had accepted several years since a government appointment in India, notwithstanding his ample estates at home.

My uncle, Sir Felix Mulgrave, my father's successor to his estates, had found them so fearfully encumbered, as to make it difficult for him to raise, by mortgage, sufficient funds to support his own extensive establishment in London.

There was then nothing to hope for from any quarter, if I except my uncle De Carryfort, a man of fortune, without wife or family, residing in Paris ; but with whom I had never had any intercourse.

The relations of my husband had been for some time before his death alienated from him ; and when they became acquainted with his will, and learnt the position in which he had placed his wife, they doubtless made it a pretext to themselves for cutting a

connexion which it was easy to foresee might become burdensome to them.

The caresses which had formerly been bestowed on my children, and the attentions which had been lavished on myself, were therefore exchanged for cold condolences and unsolicited advice, that wounded me deeply, by the insidious censure it reflected on the past.

When we are afflicted, we easily persuade ourselves that we have been criminal. We loathe the being on which divine displeasure seems to have set its mark, and we distrust even conscience, if it condemn us not.

Staggered by the weight of care and terror that fell on me at this period, and confused in all my perceptions, I could scarcely discern right from wrong. I arraigned every action of my life, to find some cause in myself for the chastisements that had fallen on me, and reproached myself for what I had hitherto deemed blameless.

My past charities appeared to me but ostentation,—my self-denial but the pride of endurance—my humility but meanness—my patience but obtuseness—and even my adoration of the Supreme, but the natural homage of taste, for the sublime and the good!

All the established maxims of truth and reason were called in question, and the opinions and cherished sentiments of happier days cast from me as illusions.

My habits of acting alone remained, to guide me through the labyrinth of sorrows in which I was lost.

There is nothing that creates around us so many illusions as wealth. We identify ourselves with our possessions, and believe that the splendour and the power which surround us are intrinsically and inseparably our own. The natural endowments of man, like his natural wants, are few ; but if, in the formation of his artificial character, his acquired capacities have not kept pace with his acquired wants, loss of property is loss of the power of self-preservation.

I had not yet decided on a place to retire to, on quitting Beech Park ; but my lagging purpose was quickened by the receipt of a note from the executors, expressing impatience at my delay, and requiring me, unless I was determined to continue the occupation of the Park, to remove from it as speedily as possible.

They added, that they had come to the determination, notwithstanding the diminution it might cause in the proceeds of the sale, to allow me to select such articles of furniture from my present residence as might be indispensable to me in my future dwelling, provided I confined the selection to things of inferior value.

I had thought my spirit sufficiently broken to receive any further stroke from the Jesuit without emotion ; but I found, on perusing this note, that I

was still alive to insult. I failed not, however, to obey its injunction at once, by hiring a small cottage, not many miles distant from the park, in the vicinity of the town of ——.

Alas! how bewildered, how undefinable were my feelings, as I wandered, on sufferance, through my own house, for the purpose of collecting a few necessary pieces of furniture, to place in my cottage; and, although I had forborne—I fear from pride—to take more than bare necessities, and those the most inferior I could find, they were still unsuitable to the lowly dwelling to which they were consigned.

In spite of the impatience of the Jesuit, I lingered in the house, which had for seven years been my home, and the birth-place of my children, until within a few days of the public sale. Time moves with rapid wing, when he conducts us to the commencement of a new era, on which we dread to enter.

Some days previous to the day of departure, I dismissed all my servants except Mary, who had accompanied me when I quitted my father's house.

She had continued in the capacity of my own maid, and had been an humble, silent participator in all my sufferings. She was now become my friend and consoler, attending me step by step, through the dark valley of humiliation, and alleviating by sympathy, and may I not also say by companionship, feelings that might otherwise have destroyed me.

I did little else, the last week of our stay in the house, but rove about the gardens and grounds, or wander from room to room, gazing on the familiar though unconscious things that surrounded me, and apostrophizing them as though they had possessed intelligence. I knew not that to part with inanimate things could inflict such an excess of pain.

My mind had so long been braced to an unnatural degree of tension, by the successive efforts of fortitude which I had been compelled to make, that now, when all was over, and nothing more remained to be done, I sank into a sort of childish weakness, and wept incessantly. I should, perhaps, have lost my reason as well as my fortitude, had not my younger child, my darling of a year old, shown symptoms of indisposition, that drew me in some degree out of myself. Yet even on an occasion like this, my sensibility was no longer what it had been—an incentive to exertion. On the contrary, one fit of crying succeeded another, until I became helpless, and without any recollection of what was necessary to be done.

Mary was now, in point of fact, the mistress, as well as the servant of the house. But for her, the hours had passed away without anything to mark their flight. I saw that the meals appeared as usual, but I knew not whence they came, and thought not of inquiring. On the last evening, as I passed through the spacious but disordered hall, and saw

corded trunks, children's toys, and other things which had been placed there to be in readiness for departure, and observed there, at the same time, Rover, my father's dog, passing from one object to another, with an occasional moan, as though he understood and participated in the distress of the occasion, I lost all self-control. So many thoughts of the past were awakened—so many deplored occurrences revived, by their association with Rover, that as they rushed on my recollection, I sank under a paroxysm of feeling that threatened my very existence.

Forgetful of everything, I observed not that Mary was sitting the whole night by my bedside, nor did I once recollect the fatigue she had gone through in the day, and her consequent want of rest.

The night was one continued struggle betwixt life and death. The visions of early life passed before me—the fleeting joys of youth and ignorance, the never-to-be-forgotten separation from my parents and my home, and all the afflicting events that had succeeded this beginning of sorrows.

When the day dawned, I thought that never had the sun shed its beams on a more heart-stricken wretch. Mary was alarmed at my symptoms, and sent very early in the morning for Father Os-sory.

His benignant countenance, beaming with the holiest affections, spoke *peace* to my soul, as he

solemnly and devoutly pronounced the word, on entering my chamber. I poured out my heart to him in self-accusation; and he reminded me of Him who was 'wounded for our transgressions'—who was 'bruised for our iniquities,' and 'with whose stripes we are healed.' 'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' 'who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.' 'He was oppressed and he was afflicted—he opened not his mouth.' 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.' 'My child,' said he, 'the Lord hath called *thee*, as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,' and He says to thee, 'for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.' 'Fight, therefore, the good fight of faith'—'lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession, before many witnesses.' 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.' 'There remaineth a rest for the people of God. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.' Then blessing me in the name of a compassionate Saviour, I was enabled to cast myself upon this all-sufficient source of strength and consolation.

No wonder that religion, which so greatly extends the sphere of the mind, in showing us our relations with God, should have so great power over us in the day of trouble, or that earthly cares should melt away in its presence. Thoughts of eternity inspire contempt for the arrogant assumptions of time, which

would claim for its *sands of an hour* an importance commensurate with endless duration.

The murmurs of my spirit were soon hushed in listening to the divine words pronounced by Father Ossory ; and observing that I had become tranquil, he left the room, that I might obtain rest.

Mary closed my curtains, and I enjoyed an hour of forgetfulness. When I awoke, I felt willing to submit to the will of God, and to acknowledge the right of divine arbitration in all my affairs.

It was well that I was thus prepared for the further chastisements that awaited me.

What I had hitherto suffered was but as a fore-taste of sorrow. The depths were still untried ; I had not yet plunged into the 'deep mire, where there was no standing, and where the floods ran over me.'

Mary and I, early in the afternoon, accompanied by my children, mounted a rustic vehicle, which had been provided for carrying us to our new abode.

But before setting out on our journey, I desired that we might be driven round the great park ; not only that I might behold for the last time the beautiful and magnificent trees there, then in full foliage, but that my elder children might receive a strong impression of the place, once their home, and in after years learn, from the loss of it, the fleeting nature of all earthly possessions, and the despotic power of a Jesuit priest.

CHAPTER IV.

It is an act of kindness to obstinate heretics, to take them out of this life ; for the longer they live, the more errors they invent, the more men do they pervert, and the greater damnation do they acquire unto themselves.—CARDINAL BELLARMINE.

WE arrived at our little cottage about four in the afternoon. It was a two-story building, consisting, on the ground floor, of two small parlours and a kitchen, and over these, three decent bed-rooms. There was a little flower-garden in front of the house, and another, of a larger size, at the back. The site of the house was somewhat raised above the level of a public road, that ran along at a short distance from it in front.

The cottage was sheltered from a view of the road by a row of fine chesnut-trees, in full foliage, when I now saw them for the first time ; and through their opening boughs, as I looked at them from a window, I discerned in the distance a range of lofty hills, on whose green sides sunbeams and shadows were sporting with each other. I was touched by the scene before me, for nature is always charming ; but recollecting the much that we had to do before we could compose ourselves for the night, I turned to the

interior of the cottage. It had already, by Mary's orders, been made delicately clean, but there were arrangements to make of our scanty furniture, which Mary and I accomplished in a few hours, and then retired to rest.

The sleeplessness of the preceding night had well prepared us to forget, at least for a few hours, the change in our accommodations.

I awoke early in the morning from an uneasy sleep, and found my youngest child, my little darling, who lay by my side, in a high fever. All my skill in curative remedies was immediately exerted, but the want of our accustomed comforts had thrown us all, more or less, into a state of indisposition.

It is not necessary to describe the violent contrast betwixt Beech Park and the comparative hovel in which we now found ourselves. I saw my good Mary's countenance pale and agitated, as she presented herself at my bedside in the morning, and observed that she wept whenever she thought herself unnoticed. My own courage rose, as, looking round on my children, I felt them to be dearer to me than ever, and hoped that we had reached the climax of our misfortunes. But Mary's too visible struggle affected me, and I felt that, should I lose her, nothing could replace her. But both she and I in a few hours were absorbed in one object.

My little one grew worse and worse, until an eruption appeared on her skin, which I immediately

recognised to be the measles. It was on every account a most inauspicious moment for such a visitation ; and as the next younger child had not yet had the disorder, she also would probably take it, and might be expected every day to sicken with it.

Mary soon recovered her elasticity, when she saw her services so much needed. But in performing the duties of a nurse, how often did both she and I forget ourselves, and look around in vain for the alleviation afforded by the ordinary comforts of a sick room ! Neither sofa nor easy-chair was there, to form a change of bed for my child, or a resting-place for myself ; nor had I a curtain to defend the dear infant's head at night, or to screen her swollen eyes from the oppressive light of day.

I might have brought such necessary articles with me, had I foreseen my wants, and my pride had allowed me to do so ; but I had not been sufficiently subdued to accept as a gratuity what I considered as my own property.

Unskilled in contrivances suggested by want, I was long in learning to make the most of the means in my possession. Mary was a far better manager ; but even she had been from her youth so accustomed to the plenty of an affluent establishment, that neither our separate nor our joint contrivances were at all equal to the demands made on our ingenuity by the want of essential things.

For two or three days after the appearance of the

eruption on my child, there were no symptoms of danger, nor had I the slightest apprehension of the disorder's terminating fatally, although I was fully aware how unfavourable to the safety of its progress were the circumstances I have mentioned.

On the morning of the fourth day I first observed those symptoms which excited my alarm; before the termination of the fifth my lovely infant was a corpse. In one week more, my next younger child was taken from me, in the same disease.

On these events I dare not, even at this distance of time, suffer myself to dwell. Only a mother who has hung over the sick pillow of her expiring infant, can understand the amount of agony included in those moments, when, watching the convulsive respiration, or gazing on the last ray of expression in the glazed eye, impotent to relieve, she waits for the sigh that announces all is over.

I saw my two little ones laid in one grave, and returned from their simple obsequies with a heart dead to all earthly things.

My soul refused to be comforted, and the oppression on it was so great as to paralyze my faculties. I no longer contended with fate, or struggled with my despair—no longer reasoned, no longer wept. The fountain of my tears—those silent intercessors for us with God—was dried up, and I wilfully tore from my heart every tender affection and every hope of happiness.

The sight of my surviving children, and their frightened, inquiring looks, were an insufferable annoyance to me. They appeared like spectres, with hideous features, resembling those phantoms which in a disordered state of the nerves pass before our sight in the darkness of night.

Mary, whose tenderness and attentions kept pace with the increasing bitterness of my feelings, was equally repugnant to me, and in a few days a delirious fever relieved me from all sense both of the past and the present.

When we look back upon our conduct in such moments of trial, we ask with surprise and humiliation, what had become of those religious principles, of which, untried, we were so sure ; or of that faith in God, which should sustain us, under every calamity ?

Man is so seldom thrown upon the strength of his principles, so seldom severed from the adventitious supports that surround him, his real power of mind, or his faith, so seldom put to the test, that he may well be pardoned for overrating it, though not for condemning those who have failed in a combat which he has never tried.

I quitted my sick chamber with diminished sensibilities. The physical languor and weakness that remained with me, continued to relax the energies of my mind, and complete what disease had begun—its entire subjugation to those external circumstances,

which, in the plenitude of my powers and my possessions, I might have vaunted myself of being able to control or despise.

Although a medical friend had attended both my children and myself without accepting a fee, the expenses of our illness, and those of the funeral, amounted to an alarming sum in the then state of my finances. While these events were taking place in my cottage, the public sale at Beech Park had been going on. It was now over, and the proceeds, it was said, amounted to far more than had been expected.

One morning, before I was scarcely convalescent enough to meet strangers, I received a visit from two of my late husband's creditors, who formed a deputation from a body of our former tradespeople. They came to inform me, they said, that they had taken the liberty, at the sale of my furniture, to buy for me a selected lot of articles, which they thought adapted to be useful to me, and which they begged to present as an offering of respect for myself, as well as of gratitude for favours formerly received from Beech Park. Amongst them were various articles of plate, which they hoped I would not consider as superfluous.

I was more affected than I wished to be by this unexpected sympathy and kindness, from a quarter in which I might least have expected to find it, for I was yet unable to bear emotion.

Our afflictions have done much for us when they have reduced our pride, and taught us lowliness of

heart. But a very short time since, I could not have accepted such an offering without doing violence to my nature ; but now I was able to receive it with feelings of gratitude which I was incapable of expressing.

When my bounteous present arrived, Mary and I found that it produced a delightful addition to our comforts, as, amongst many other things, were a sofa and two easy-chairs. The plate was especially welcome to me, as I was able to turn it immediately into money, and thereby discharge those debts which had been incurred by my illness.

As the agitation and suffering arising from our new position subsided, and grief had settled itself into a sort of composure, I began to breathe more freely, and to look around me with a degree of fortitude, which I had not expected ever to feel again. I recollected the lonely situation of Father Ossory, who, in visiting me during my illness, was so much exhausted every time he came to my cottage, by the walk of two or three miles, that I became very desirous of bringing him nearer to us.

After Mary and I had consulted together, we thought that we might, without any material inconvenience to ourselves, offer him an asylum in our little cottage.

The addition which I had received to my furniture, enabled me to fit up a room for him in tolerable comfort.

When the invitation was given to him, he accepted it with so much gratitude as to indicate that he must have suffered greatly from the loneliness and want of comfort in his own cabin. He came to us without loss of time. Indeed, if he had lingered we might never have had the comfort of receiving him at all, as he appeared to be in a state of rapid decline. It was a great pleasure to me to entertain, under my humble roof, my father's friend, and one so long an inmate of our house.

On his arrival, the greetings of Rover, and the fond caresses of the children, excited him so much that I was obliged to put a speedy termination to them, by leading him to the quiet of his own room, in which, as his books and personals were already arranged, he found himself instantly at home.

Mary had become very skilful, though the occupation was new to her, in small cookeries, and proved herself so good a nurse, that in about ten days Father Ossory had so far recovered his strength as to look like a new man, and feel himself able to take the lead in our family worship. I never ceased to be thankful that I had been able to number him amongst us.

He had never yet made me acquainted with the immediate circumstances that had led him to a formal renunciation of the Catholic faith; but he one day spontaneously entered upon a relation of them.

'You must, I think,' said he to me, 'have been

aware, before my functions as your confessor and spiritual adviser ceased, that I had become doubtful, on many points on which it had been my habit to be dogmatical.

‘It is to you, my young friend, that I owe the beginnings of a conversion to that Protestant truth in which I hope to rejoice through all eternity. After I had been severed from your family, by distance and other circumstances, I was much alone, and had great leisure for reflection.

‘Examining myself, I became very unhappy and dissatisfied, in the performance of my accustomed routine of religious duty. I was as one that moved without knowing whither my path led; and every step I took seemed upon such dubious ground, that what I rested on appeared to sink from under me. You will doubtless be surprised, when I tell you that it had not, at any period of my life, been my practice to read the Scriptures.

‘In short, I was scarcely at all acquainted with them, or I think it would not have been possible for me to have remained so long in errors so flagrant as those I had always held. It was when I heard you, a mere child, whose intellect was but in its dawn, speak of the enlightening power of the Scriptures, that my sluggish conscience first awoke to a sense of my guilty omission, as a teacher of religion, in having never made myself acquainted with them.

‘Weighed down by a sense of the sinfulness of

this omission, I feared, at first, that I had thrown away the salvation offered in the Gospel to him who believes. I began, however, to study the inspired volume in good earnest ; but the more I did so, the more I felt myself in the wrong, and the less able was I to reconcile it with the Romish commentaries on it, or with the traditions, assumptions, and doctrines of our church.

‘I could find no scriptural ground on which to base these things, and our most pious and erudite writers failed to prove to me, that our church was ‘built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.’

‘I will not weary you with a detail of my first steps in repentance and faith, or relate the struggles I had with myself, before I could determine on making known the change that had taken place in my views. I was, for some time, short-sighted enough to suppose that I might bind truth to my heart, and yet continue to hold the office of a Romish priest. I saw not, that by retaining this office, I should be continuing to teach, and to uphold the errors of Romanism ; and that to do so, with the convictions I had of their nature and tendency, would be a perilous offence against God.

‘It happened, at length, that a crisis arrived, which impelled me to a decision.

‘The immediate cause of this was an occurrence which was, perhaps, not unusual, but its character was new to *me*.

‘A man, who was a stranger, applied to me one day to confess him. I felt a particular reluctance to comply with his requirement, as there was something in his look and manner so indicative of extreme depravity, that I was afraid of learning what I might afterwards regret to know. I endeavoured to put him off, but he would not be diverted from his purpose, and I allowed him to enter the confessional.

‘I there learnt from him, that, aided by an accomplice, he had engaged to take the life of an individual, whom he named.

‘The intended victim was a gentleman whom I knew; and this circumstance heightened the shock of the communication. I remonstrated with the man on the heinousness of his purpose, and pressed forcibly on him the danger in which he would place his soul by the perpetration of it. He told me, it was to avert such a consequence that he had confessed his intention of committing the deed, and that he had brought money with him to buy off the guilt of it—offering me, at the same time, a hundred pounds. The affair, he said, was one of hire, and not of personal malice; and he, therefore, thought the sum he offered a very handsome one.

‘Never having been placed in similar circumstances, by any confessing party before, I became more indignant than was compatible with the perfect self-possession essential to my office.

‘I replied, that as a being amenable to God, who

had said, 'thou shalt not kill,' I could listen to nothing further, in relation to his atrocious purpose, unless he would enter into an engagement to relinquish it.

'He answered, doggedly, that he was sworn to do it, and he would do it; but, as money was no object to his employer, he would double the amount he had offered, if that would satisfy the church.

'I replied, that no amount could induce me to sanction so monstrous a purpose, by making it a matter of barter, and that I would hear no more from him. He forgot himself for a moment, and became so violent, both in language and demeanour, that had I not succeeded in overawing him, the confessional might have been desecrated by personal outrage.

'We parted thus.*

'As the nature of my professional vows did not permit me to give any warning to the doomed victim, I was obliged to lock up the corroding secret in my own breast. I examined every possible evasion of my vow, but could find none that would not have done violence to my conscience, and branded me with perjury of the most awful, and in Catholic verbiage, of the most damning kind.

'I have said that the intended victim was a gentleman of my own acquaintance. I was one day sent

* Note 11.

for, hastily, to confess him. Alas! the bloody deed had been accomplished. I found him but just alive!

‘On retiring from this awful duty, I was so filled with horror at my participation in the atrocity, by my omitting to warn the victim, that I fled into the mountains, away from every human eye, for many hours, to give vent to my agony.

On returning home I was seized with an acute disease that scarcely left me with life. During my illness, my mind was emancipated from its thralldom, and I resolved to renounce for ever, before God and man, that *infallible church* whose laws compel its ministers to unholy vows, under the guise of faithfulness to the confessional; and whose authorities connive at the violation of every moral obligation, as expediency or its own interests may dictate.’

As the good old man ceased speaking, he sank back in his chair, and remained for some time apparently in meditation. At length, he exclaimed, with a fervour of manner foreign to his habits,—‘The Romish church I consider to be the great despotism of the world, which is supported by the power it obtains over the souls of men, through the agency of its confessional. In the scrutiny it exercises there, it aims at emulating the omniscience of the Most High, by endeavouring to ‘discern the thoughts afar off;’ while by barbarously dragging to light every latent passion, and every half-formed evil purpose, which

might otherwise have expired in embryo, the confessional becomes the nursery of crime.

‘The Romish church asserts, in effect, ‘all souls are mine,’ thus arrogating to itself that which belongs to God alone. Hence, its persecution unto death, whenever it has power, of those who dissent from its creeds, stigmatising them as heretics, and consigning them, with religious solemnities, to an eternal damnation, under the blasphemous pretence of doing service to God !

‘This practice of human sacrifices,* which is distinctly recorded as a doctrine in its creeds, is, in a church nominally *Christian*, so notoriously adverse to the precepts and spirit of Christianity, as to render the assumption of its name a revolting misnomer ; and to reduce it by its hypocrisy below the level of the most barbarous paganism of the ancient world ; and even below the thuggery of modern India ! Oh, what have I been doing for more than eighty years, that I have discerned these things only now !’

I was alarmed at the vehemence with which he uttered this lamentation, and approached him to inquire if he was ill.

‘No, my good friend,’ he replied, ‘not ill in body, but broken-hearted, and bewildered by the old things which I now view in so new a light. I am like a man who, having been born blind, is late in life en-

* Note 12.

dowed with sight. The light of truth overpowers me, and the magnitude and prominence of those things which I was wont to consider as nothing, overwhelm me by their importance, and their relation with eternity.

‘ Having been born in the Romish church, it was the cradle of my intellect ; and in that cradle I was taught those complicated dogmas, and those specious falsehoods, which were as little understood by me in subsequent years, as then. It is in the nature of the teaching of that church to stultify the intellect, as it is also the natural tendency of its sophistries to destroy the perception of truth.

‘ As the first and most indispensable of its doctrines, I was despotically taught *the infallibility of the church*. In that doctrine it was my duty to rest without inquiry ; and I became, what all Romish individuals become, more or less, an automaton, actuated neither by reason nor by instinct, but coerced by an external agency, which, while it fetters the outer man with forms, and surrounds him with mimeries of sacred things, leaves the inner man to ‘ perish for lack of knowledge.’ Knowledge is the antidote to popery. Alas, how great has been my guilt of ignorance !’

As he ceased speaking, he arose, and went to his own apartment.

It was a dull, cold afternoon. The very cattle on the hill sides, opposite our windows, moved sluggishly ;

and no human form had been visible for some time, when I saw passing along the road a tall stout female figure, very much muffled up, as if she too felt the cold. She moved with a hurried step, as though impelled by some urgency : but I should not perhaps have noticed her, had she not appeared to be a stranger.

Father Ossory returned to the room, while I yet stood at the window, which I immediately quitted, and took a seat by him near the fire. We sat for some minutes in silence, which he broke by saying,

‘ You are aware of the persecution from all quarters which I endured at first, on my secession from the Romish church, and by which even my life was occasionally endangered. But I have to thank God, that these things did not shake my faith in those divine truths, with which I had so lately become acquainted, and, believing that I had exchanged a false for a true worship, and being, as I trusted, under the scriptural banner of the cross, I had no anxiety respecting my personal safety, or even my life. I rather hoped that I might be found worthy to suffer unto death, in a cause to which I could now devote but a worthless fragment of my life ; and my deep feelings of repentance for the past led me to court danger rather than to avoid it, in the performance of the few public duties that remained to me.’

As he ceased speaking, Father Ossory rose from his seat and stood in the front of the fire, when

instantaneously a shot was fired through the window of the room, which, passing close by his head, penetrated an opposite panel in the wainscot.

I started from my seat, forcibly drawing him at the same moment out of the line of the window, towards which I had not time to turn my head, before a second shot passed through the room, from the same quarter, and in the same direction as the former.

We both stood for a second, speechless, and then retired precipitately, to a room on the other side of the cottage, where the children and Mary were.

It was already dusk, and the increasing darkness of evening soon enabled us to close the window-shutters, without exciting any suspicion of our apprehensions in those who might be watching our movements from without.

In our little circle, those of us who comprehended our perilous position were in no enviable state of feeling. Not one of the least affected by the incident was Rover, who, chained within his own house, kept up an incessant growl, interrupted only by furious barking, which, by drawing attention to his whereabouts, might have provoked an attack upon him.

The good father was exceedingly distressed at the occurrence, because he considered it to have been on his account that we were placed in so much danger. Under this impression, he proposed that on the mor-

row he should leave us, and commit himself alone to the hazards of his own position ; but of course I would not listen to such a proposal for a moment. Indeed, I was not at all certain, denounced as I had often been from the altars of different parish chapels in the county, when first I abjured popery, that I was not as much the aim of the assassin as Father Ossory.

The children, without being informed of what had occurred, saw that there was some unusual anxiety amongst us, and became restless and uneasy. They were kept up, too, beyond their usual hour of going to bed, for I could not under such circumstances suffer them to be a moment out of my sight. Rover still continued growling and barking, and Father Ossory and I reconnoitred from the windows of his room, which commanded the public road, the appearance of things without ; but the darkness was so extreme that nothing could be seen.

Our neighbourhood was utterly destitute of protection ; so that had we been venturous enough to seek assistance for the night, from the small town in our vicinity, there would have been little chance of obtaining it ; while there would have been a certainty of our being watched and waylaid in the attempt. Father Ossory was, indeed, earnest in a desire to find his way to the town by the light of a hand-lantern, but we would not allow it.

After sitting up unusually late, we assembled

round our family altar, and commended ourselves to God with fervent supplication that he would be our guardian through the hours of darkness.

It is certainly worth remembering, that we all slept as soundly as usual on that cold, dark, January night, and that we awoke on the morrow to hail a bright and cheerful morning.

The warm greetings with which we met on that morning, as we counted up our little household, and assured ourselves that not one was missing, formed an epoch, upon which I have often looked back with strong and grateful emotion.

CHAPTER V.

Thy assailant is quick, skilful, and deadly.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE I was conversing with Father Ossory after breakfast, Mary, who had been into the town, returned. As she came into the room, she approached me with extraordinary earnestness and agitation; saying, that in her walk through the town, she had seen Margaret Brian, who was so handsomely and fashionably dressed that she should not have known her, had not her face been perfectly familiar to her. No recognition had taken place on Brian's part, and Mary was in doubt whether she had even seen her, as their eyes did not meet.

This information was sufficiently alarming to occasion a new source of anxiety; but, after some reflection, it appeared to me more than probable that Brian herself might have been the party who aimed at playing the assassin on the preceding evening.

It was certainly corroborative of this suspicion, that the female figure, muffled up, which I had seen pass the window, just before the shot was fired into

it, answered precisely to the description which I had always heard of the size and height of Brian. If it was so, there was small chance of averting her purpose, although she had failed in her first attempt, as she was always inflexible in pursuit of her objects. But as she had been charged with felony by my father, and had only escaped the prosecution of the charge by flight, it might prove an effectual mode of defending ourselves against farther outrage, to seize her by legal authority on that ground.

In pursuance of this idea, I immediately wrote to a magistrate whom I had formerly known, and who was one of those who had held a council at Mulgrave Castle, at the time of the incendiary attempt to destroy it.

As I began to address this gentleman, who was a man of rank, I shrank from the task I had assumed ; for, how will my appeal be received ? was an inquiry which I could not but make, and which entirely unnerved me. It is always difficult for the poor and the obscure in life to interest their superiors in their difficulties, and still more so for those who having sunk very far below themselves, are no longer recognisable by their former associates.

But I pursued my object, in spite of my timidity, alluding as slightly as possible to my former self, and merely placing before the Marquis of — the perilous situation of my family, in a cottage half a mile distant from any other habitation, thus fired

into, as I believed, by a woman, who was known to have plotted the destruction of Mulgrave Castle.

As the marquis lived five miles off, I was totally at a loss how to convey my letter to him ; and as it was necessary that he should have it without delay, I seriously lamented the difficulty.

When Father Ossory understood the impediment, he insisted on being himself the bearer of the letter. It seemed almost barbarous to allow him to undertake such a commission ; but he would not be diverted from it by any remonstrance I could make, on the impossibility of his reaching a place five miles distant, without a conveyance. Assuring me that he should easily and speedily find one, he set out on his errand.

Although I was well aware of the importance of not losing an hour in my application to the magistrate, and knew how much more effectual it would be through an agent like Father Ossory, I was filled with inquietude during his absence, lest, if any enemy should be in pursuit of his life, he might be assassinated before he could return to us.

When, therefore, we saw his bent and wasted form, in the dusk of the evening, entering the wicket, we were all rejoiced beyond measure ; and the children, clapping their hands, ran out to lead him in.

He had been so fortunate as to obtain a conveyance ; and yet he was so weary and exhausted, that I

could not but reproach myself for every languid symptom he exhibited.

Nevertheless, it was a joyful re-union, and we felt afresh how valuable he was to us in our loneliness; while he described himself as feeling like the dove sent out of the ark, until he found himself again in the cottage, in his accustomed easy-chair.

His mission had been very successful, the marquis of —— having promised him, that Brian should be immediately looked after, and ‘a bailiff sent to pay his respects to her.’ After she was secured, it would, he said, be the part of some of the family to appear against her.

I had not hitherto been aware, that after she had been committed to legal keeping, I should have anything further to do with her; but now, in being obliged to appear against her, I saw myself involved in serious consequences, if I should not be able to prove her the criminal I suspected her to be.

I was becoming very anxious, lest, by the movement I had made, I had rendered our position more insecure than ever, when I heard the wicket-gate move on its hinges, and turning my head towards the window, saw a gentleman enter the garden. It was my uncle from London! Oh, what unexpected joy! But he looked so jaded and worn, that my joy was instantly dashed with pain.

But he was there, and that was an event of itself to inspire gladness in our whole household. He had left

his carriage and servants at the neighbouring town, and walked thence to the cottage.

I had seen my uncle but once since my father's death, when he paid a visit to my husband and myself soon after our marriage, and remained with us several days. Since then, I had had but little intercourse with him ; his affairs in London, and the encumbered estate of which he had come into possession, absorbing his whole time and attention.

He was visibly and excessively shocked at the situation in which he found me, and declared with great energy, that he had no idea of my having been left in such utter destitution. Fitzgerald, he said, assured him in the last interview he had had with him, that my jointure was well secured, whatever might be the consequences to his estate or himself, of any irregularities he might fall into.

'I knew,' said he, 'that he was a gambler, but I did not suppose him to be so utterly unprincipled as I now find he was. What a will !' He lamented in the most affectionate terms his own inability to afford me aid against the executors, or to ameliorate my condition, except he could do so by any influence he might have in society. I then inquired if he thought it possible that I could in any way place myself more advantageously in London, where I should be near him, who would then be able to protect me.

I saw his whole countenance change, and assume an expression of strong emotion, as this proposal was

made, and many minutes elapsed before he attempted a reply. When he did so, he hesitated and faltered, in a voice that was dry and husky, and in words that I did not at first quite understand. But I finally discovered, that it required more moral courage than my uncle possessed, to identify himself with a reduced and almost destitute relative, in the immediate vicinity of his own sphere.

Sir Felix Mulgrave, after sitting silent a few minutes, looked at his watch, and pleaded the lateness of the hour, and his expected immediate return to the inn, where he had ordered dinner, as an excuse for his instant departure. But I could not let him depart without speaking to him of Brian, and the extreme peril in which we considered ourselves from the occurrence of the preceding day, with the discovery of her being in the neighbourhood.

I therefore begged him to indulge me a few minutes longer, as it was necessary that he should be informed of that in which the family of Mulgrave at large were interested. As he was of course already acquainted with Brian's former delinquencies, he saw at once the importance of securing her, as well as the strong probability of her being the party who had fired into my cottage. When he further learnt that, in case of her being arrested at my instance, it would be necessary for me to appear against her, he said at once that he would take that part on himself,

and also adopt measures for the future exemption of my cottage from her attacks.

He then hastily rose, and without any apparent pain at leaving me in so forlorn a condition, gave me a finger for his farewell, and hurried off.

Thus ended an interview that in its first moments had given rise to glowing hopes, which drooped and expired before he disappeared from the tearful gaze with which I watched him out of sight. It is difficult to satisfy the requirements of such poor as myself, who are more galled by the contumely of their former equals, than by the deprivations of poverty, and would rather forego a benefit coldly or haughtily rendered, than obtain it at the cost of wounded feelings.

But a shower of tears after my uncle's departure cleared my mental vision, and enabled me to see and to acknowledge that he had in reality been more kind than I could reasonably have expected him to be.

As we had taken measures for our safety, we lay down on this night with rather less anxiety than on the preceding. Before retiring, we let loose the dog, that we might further secure ourselves, by the exercise of his fine and faithful instincts in our defence. He had been, indeed, so restless under his chain from the first moment of the attack upon the cottage, that had we not feared for his life, we should have given him his liberty then. Now that he had obtained it, he seemed half frantic with de-

light ; running round the house in every direction, and snuffing the ground as he went, to find out the track of the enemy.

The moon was only in her first quarter, and the sky was cloudy ; but there was enough of light, as we examined appearances without, from an upper window, to discern any object that might have been in motion, but none was visible.

Rover's terrific voice, which must have been heard a long way off, as he dashed about in all directions, was of itself a protection.

We were happy enough on the following morning to find him unharmed, and reposing in his own house.

In the course of the day, I had a note from my uncle, to tell me that he was of opinion we had nothing more to fear from Margaret Brian ; as before any legal authority could be made available against her, she had disappeared, under the alarming rumour, which had circulated like wildfire, that a process was being instituted to secure her person on an old charge of felony, and a new one of attacking a cottage by firing into it.

The currency which my uncle found it easy to give to this rumour would, he thought, be found sufficient to deter her from being again seen in our vicinity. Thus ended an alarm which, had it continued, must have entirely destroyed the tranquillity of our little household. As it was, indeed, we

could not at once regain the same degree of security that we had been accustomed to feel previously.

But having done all that we could do, we felt that we might, without presumption, confide our future to the Almighty.

Rover, after this, was regularly installed as our nightly guard, and well did he perambulate our little territory and its neighbouring grounds, from the close until the dawn of day; so that under his guardianship we enjoyed three months of undisturbed security.

The more we reflected on the probability that it was Brian who had fired into our cottage, the stronger was our belief in it.

She had always been a notorious zealot of her church, even in her early days, and an active and successful persecutor of Protestants, in proportion to the irresponsibility of her low social position. She was, in fact, a true child of the Infallible Church—crafty and fatal in her machinations, and more dangerous than an individual who has either character or station to lose by the detection of an enormity.

CHAPTER VI.

Calm on the bosom of thy God,
 Fair spirit, rest thee now ;
 Even while with us thy footsteps trod
 His seal was on thy brow.
 Dust to its narrow house beneath,
 Soul to its place on high !
 They that have seen thy look in death,
 No more will fear to die.

IT was now the month of May—that sweetest and most inspiring season of the year—when the promises of hope are written on every swelling bud, and an atmosphere vital and buoyant wakes every sense to pleasure, and renders even our sighs rapturous.

Can it be, that the rushing joy of a world springing into new life, thus showered upon it by the Creator's own hand, is prepared only for material nature? May not the spirit of man drink of it and live? Are the movements of the sweet spring, in its opening leaves, and its soft tints, advancing daily to the perfection of beauty, to be contemplated without participation in their triumphs? The manifestation of that renovating power which, from analogy, promises so much to man, should lift him above the

depressions of a transient life, and enable him to see, though afar off, his own future, radiated with the glorious hopes that are written on it. Yet, the first flush of this inspiration over, and *my* hopes evaporated in sighs; and exalted thoughts found a grave in earthly care—for to whatever point of the compass I sent an inquiring glance, the future was to me a barren waste—a wilderness of spectres—from which I was glad to shrink back, even on the perplexing, unsatisfying present.

Father Ossory was still in his usual health, living very much in the solitude of his own room, in far higher communion than that of earth, and awaiting his dismissal from it.

Although he never reviewed his earthly career but with sorrow for the unconscious error in which he had lived, yet he had attained to that peace with God which enabled him to rejoice in hope of a blessed future. He several times attempted a written protest against the errors and practices of the church which he had renounced; but his sight had lately failed him, and the state of his nerves made it impossible for him to pursue any subject closely.

I therefore prevailed on him to relinquish this design, as I feared for the consequences to himself of his persisting in it.

On the evening of the fifteenth of May, he took a walk with my children and myself round our garden. The sun was still above the horizon, but declining

fast ; and its setting rays were strikingly beautiful. The sweet notes of some invisible bird, which sang amongst the trees, were so touching as to arrest my attention, and almost abstract me from the scene. The children plucked polyanthuses and lilies of the valley, and placed them in every button-hole of Father Ossory's coat within their reach ; thus dressing him in flowers, and then dancing before him, delighted with their achievement and the gaiety of his appearance. He was unusually serious, and did not enter into the spirit of their frolics as he was accustomed to do, but seemed faint and abstracted.

I shortened our saunter, and returned with him to the house. After sitting about five minutes, he rose abruptly, and bade me and the children good night, kissing each of them, and begging them to take care of his bouquets, by putting them into water until the morning.

After he had dismissed the children, by giving them something to do, he asked me if I would take one more turn with him in the garden.

Of course I accompanied him ; and when he found we were alone, he said to me, in an under-tone, 'Did you observe the notes of the bird that was singing while the children were dressing me in flowers ?'

'Yes ; I thought they were very sweet. But I fear the children prevented you from enjoying them.'

'I heard the song,' said he, almost in a whisper; 'it was my requiem.'

'Oh no, no, not yet!' said I.

'Ah, my friend! 'The night is far spent—the day is at hand.' Rejoice for me! Yet I have still much to say to you, and therefore I intend rising early in the morning. Will you be up at six?'

'Yes, certainly, if you wish it.'

'Oh! I would not die without telling you what I feel of gratitude, of anxiety, of hope, of fear for you. But I cannot talk now. May God Almighty bless you! I must go to rest.'

His thoughts seemed to wander, as he said to himself, 'Hark! they whisper; angels say, Sister spirit, come away!' And then he quickened his step; while I, seeing him totter, endeavoured to assist him into the house. He bade me 'good night' at the foot of the stairs. I wished to help him up, but he would not permit it.

After the children had gone to bed, I conversed some time with Mary, who used to call the hour when she and I were left alone, 'her holiday.' On this occasion, we both shed tears in anticipation of an event, which I felt could not be far off.

At a late hour we retired softly to our different chambers. I lay long awake, and saw the dawn creeping in at the window before I fell asleep. Shortly after, I was again awake, and stealing with noiseless step to Father Ossory's chamber door,

listened there awhile, to learn if he was stirring, or if I could hear any sound that might assure me of his welfare. But everything around was as still as death.

I feared to open his door lest I might disturb him; and retreating to my own room, I lay down, and again fell asleep.

When I next awoke, I heard the sweet voices of the children, and Mary's quiet movements below. I arose immediately, and dressing myself hastily, hurried to Father Ossory's room. But all was still silent there; and I was reluctant, though it was now near eight, to tap at his door, and perhaps awake him from sleep, to ask how he was.

I waited another half hour in my own room, and still hearing no movement in his, I tapped at his door. No answer—a second tap—and still no reply. I then softly opened the door, and could discern, as I stood at it, the extreme paleness of his face, as he lay in bed. Walking slowly to his bedside, I saw at once what I had feared—the angel of death had been there—his spirit had departed.

* * * * *

Although the circumstances of the preceding evening had certainly prepared me to think his death might be near, yet I was not willing, when I saw it, to believe in my own prescience. Neither was I, as I ought to have been, prepared for the shock of the event. No; I stood breathlessly gazing, and wept,

and touched his cold hands, and marked his fine open forehead, now without its usual look of care, and his whole countenance, placid and tranquil as a face of marble. It was death.

On looking round the chamber, I observed that the customary refreshments which had been placed for him were untouched. But he had evidently been occupied after he had retired; for on a table in the middle of the room his writing-desk was open, and on his dressing-table lay three small packages in writing paper. One of them was inscribed,—

‘For Frederic William Fitzgerald, a gift from his friend,
‘W. OSSORY.’

Another, ‘For Mary Walter, a gift from her friend,
‘W. OSSORY.’

The third, ‘For my funeral expenses, being all the money I have.’

Inside the package addressed to my son, which contained a gold watch of ancient workmanship, was a note in the following words:—

‘The enclosed watch was given me, more than sixty years since, by Marie Thérèse, Empress of Austria, as a mark of her approbation of a slight service which I, then a student in Vienna, had been so fortunate as to render her. As an ancient relic of a Royal personage so illustrious as the donor, I would fain hope it may not be wholly unacceptable to Frederic, although its pecuniary value is too insignificant to render it worthy of the grandson of Sir

William Mulgrave.' The packet addressed to Mary contained the silver watch of the donor, which he had been accustomed to wear constantly.

He must have wound it up before going to bed, as it was still ticking when we opened the parcel.

The third packet contained ten guineas. In a short note addressed to myself, which lay on his desk, and which was full of the most affecting acknowledgments, and earnest aspirations for my family at large, he begged that his funeral might be performed at the smallest possible cost; and that, if the ten guineas which he had left for that purpose should prove insufficient, the better part of his wardrobe might be sold to cover the deficiency. The remainder of his apparel he requested me to give to the poor of the neighbourhood, in such proportions as I might think best.

There was a postscript at the end of the note in the following words:—

'Time, or rather *eternity*, presses on me; and I had forgotten that I intended offering my books to you, my most kind and generous friend. I beg you to accept them, for it is, even at this solemn moment, a thought of passing pleasure, that your hands will sometimes turn over those pages on which mine have so often rested; and that the reasoning which once instructed me, or the delineations that delighted me, may have a similar effect on you. Farewell! I go to rest—perchance to meet you in

the morning at six. Yet no ; I shall not see another morning until that of the resurrection, for I am, even now, dying.

Strange, that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long.'

* * * * *

While his corpse remained in the house, it was distressing to observe the uneasiness of the children. They spoke to each other in whispers, and clung together even as they stood by my side. Nor was Mary or I, perhaps, less affected than they, by the feeling that death was again amongst us.

Severed as we were by our peculiar circumstances from the ordinary sympathy of neighbours and friends, the desolation of that consciousness became paralysing. I found the only effectual mode of rousing myself from torpor, was to visit the corpse, and contemplate closely that which in absence so much affected my imagination. In these visits, the children never attempted to join me after having once seen the dead ; nor do I think they recovered from the shock of that sight until after the funeral of the deceased.

We buried him on the afternoon of the twenty-first of May, in a small, obscure burying-ground, belonging to some Methodists in the neighbourhood, in which my two infants had been laid, about twelve months before. An itinerant minister of that most kind and pious sect performed the funeral service

over the venerated dead ; our little household comprising the only mourners that stood round his grave.

In the immediate vicinity of that grave was the small mound that covered my little infants, and which at that time was blooming with fragrant flowers that had been planted by Mary the preceding year, and since tended by my dear children.

When we returned home, we were greeted by Rover, who had been left to guard the cottage in our absence, with the most decided, though not boisterous joy. He seemed to understand the whole affair, having, like the children, so long as the corpse remained in the house, gone about with a dejected air, occasionally moaning as he met with anything that had belonged to the departed.

We were many days, and even weeks, before we were able to return to our ordinary pursuits with any feeling of interest in them ; and as I reflected on the singular piety, amiability, and intelligence of our departed friend, I could not but feel that his loss to us, as an inmate, was real, and must be lasting.

It is true he had fallen, ' Like a shock of corn, fully ripe in its season,' and his death had been foreseen and expected. But this did not diminish our grief. The good are taken from the evil to come ; and this was literally and strikingly true in Father Ossory's case. Nevertheless, I was not as resigned as I ought to have been to the event, for at the domestic altar we had sustained an irreparable loss,

where his venerable form and serious countenance gave force to every sentiment and exhortation he uttered, and impressed his hearers with the reality of those invisible things, which, depicted by a less intelligent and earnest speaker, might have seemed but as words of course. Our distance from any Protestant place of worship had also rendered him invaluable to us as a minister of the gospel, when, as our little group were wont to assemble round him on the Sabbath, the devotional feelings with which he was accustomed to inspire his auditors made me often exclaim, mentally, in fervour of feeling, ' Surely, this is none other but the House of God ! ' Now, we saw him no more in the arm-chair he had so often filled, and we listened in vain to catch the accents of affection that fell from his lips. But we knew the consoling fact, that although he would ' not return to us, we should go to him.'

CHAPTER VII.

Il n'y a de sûr que la peine ; il n'y a qu'elle, qui tienne impitoyablement ce qu'elle promet.—MADAME DE STAEL.

IN looking into my pecuniary affairs now, at the end of my first year of widowhood and of poverty, I found that I had not duly estimated the cost of sustaining my family.

While Father Ossory lived, I continually put off the day of reckoning, apprehensive that the results might be so alarming as to cause me to betray to him the actual state of my position, which, as it was utterly out of his power to amend it, would have made him wretched.

Now, however, it was necessary that I should begin a new course, for I was in advance of my miserable pittance ; and as my children's wants would be daily increasing, it was necessary that I should observe a more rigid economy than I had hitherto practised. How I should be able to provide for the future, was still more perplexing than for the present, as I had no prospect in life for my

daughters, except I could teach them to live by their own exertions.

My eldest girl, Dora, was just seven years of age, and Caroline not yet six.

My youngest child, my son, already four and a half, was but nominally mine, and destined to be torn from me in the course of a few months. Yet so long as I saw him under my roof, and folded him in my arms, I was wont to cherish hope that that cruel destiny might yet be averted. If not, I dreaded to think of the consequences of seeing him borne away.

But as we have no prescience sufficient to inform us of what a day may bring forth, so we are not permitted to create phantom griefs, and incapacitate ourselves for present duty, by anticipations of future evil that may never arrive. Meanwhile, I read, and wept, and prayed with my child, in labouring to give him scriptural ideas of God and divine truth, inducing thereby almost a precocity in such knowledge, which I well knew, like the forced plant of the hot-house, might perish under a single blast, by an untimely removal from its native soil and atmosphere. Nevertheless, it was my duty to continue my labour, and though it was not in my power to mitigate the hardships which my son was now enduring on the very threshold of existence, I hoped they might at least prove a salutary discipline for whatever lot awaited him.

After much painful rumination, I resolved on bringing up my daughters for private governesses. They were both very intelligent girls, and until a year ago had been instructed, so far as children of their age could be, by an English governess, and were sufficiently advanced in the elements of knowledge when they came out of her hands.

My son, also, at four could read first books, and perform with ease those little tasks given to children of his age. I regret to say that during the past year very little progress had been made under my own tuition in book-knowledge; but I had taught them many practical and useful matters of fact, and had endeavoured to imbue them with common sense.

Ornamental education is often imposed on the young, before any foundation has been laid in the mind of useful and essential knowledge. I dreaded this course of proceeding with my children, as I was fearful of producing a result that might be fatal to their future success, in the sphere of life which I had chosen for them, and which might retard the development of that sound common sense, which can alone form a durable basis for every human acquirement. I wished also to avoid the common error in private education, of prematurely refining the character; as it appeared to me that refinement should be the natural offspring of taste, and not the graft of cultivation. And for the very humble

sphere in which *my* children were destined to move, to aim at refinement would have been a cruel error ; as all courage, short of moral heroism, must be insufficient to render their career successful, and fence off from them the innumerable lacerations incident to their destined profession.

I had already lost much time in the process of preparation ; and before I could proceed further, without interruption, it was necessary that the amount of my future family expenditure should be reduced to rule.

Mary, who had originally been brought up somewhat delicately, and whose occupations as a lady's maid had been of the lightest kind of labour, had, since we had been living at the cottage, voluntarily assumed, and succeeded in performing, all kinds of household work with the most admirable nicety. For this she had received no higher wages than heretofore ; but even this amount, if she remained with me, I should be obliged to reduce. As this was a species of injustice against which my mind strongly revolted, I found it for many days impossible to speak of it. At length, I explained to her my pecuniary difficulty, requesting her to take her own time, but to seek another situation, in which she would be more worthily recompensed for her valuable services.

When I had given utterance to this proposal, it proved so barbarous an outrage both on my own

feelings and on poor Mary's, as almost to create a scene.

For myself, overpowered by conflicting fears and emotions, I nearly fainted.

Mary, more heroic or less responsible, though she wept, declined, with great modesty but with immovable firmness, my proposal to part with her. It was useless to remonstrate; she had determined, she said, never to leave me until the wheel of fortune came round; and of this she was so sure, that with genuine credulity, which often assumes the character of prescience, she perpetually told her dreams and accumulated omens to cheer my spirits and convert me to her faith. It would have been an insult to urge any further, on so generous a creature, a point of interest.

I therefore forebore to do so; and constructed my plans for the future upon the certainty of her remaining with me.

The daily education of the children became henceforth an absorbing occupation for me; while Mary took upon her the whole management and labour of household affairs. The sum on which we were all to be subsisted was so limited, that only the extremest frugality could enable me to live without debts.

We reduced ourselves to the coarsest fare, which, though at first a great trial, and often productive of languor and suffering, was persevered in until the

difficulty was conquered; and my children became such little philosophers as to be almost persuaded that pain was no evil, or at least, that the pleasure of conquering themselves was greater than the pain attending the conflict. My heart tasted again of pleasure as I discerned the development of their faculties, and saw principles taking root in their hearts which I considered more valuable than an inheritance. Stripped as they were of what should have been their hereditary possessions, I persuaded myself that I was placing within their reach a species of wealth far more their own, and less accessible to the accidents of fortune, than that which they had lost, when I taught them experimentally that internal power over themselves, which is the most precious of all attainments.

I found the instruction of my children a labour of infinite rewards; and could I have made any provision for them that would have survived myself, I should now have enjoyed content, in spite of the meanness of my condition. But to know that if I were removed, my dear and innocent children might sink down to companionship with the paupers of the land, was a contingency I could not endure to look on; and yet it was ever in my thoughts. It was thus I was perpetually haunted with anxieties; and while cherishing and recording my griefs, my unregistered joys took flight and were forgotten.

But all is not bitterness even in poverty; there

are sources of pleasure over which it has no empire, else were its iron hand as deadly to the soul as to the sense. The companions of my retreat never failed me, whether I speak of the little circle that formed my domestic society, or of the philosophers and poets that graced my rustic shelves. Nevertheless, when, after another year of pecuniary experiment—of laborious exertion and life-destroying privations—I found myself again in debt, I was plunged into despair.

I found, upon looking into my affairs, that I could no longer retain even my little cottage; and the two years of experiment which I had made in the education of my daughters convinced me that, in a place so remote from masters, it would be impossible to give them those accomplishments, even had my income been adequate to doing so, which were necessary to prepare them for their future lot in life. It was impossible that I could make any additional retrenchment where I was, without endangering the health of my family. It therefore became a matter of necessity that we should remove to some less expensive locality. But whither? Ah! what a dreadful question is this for any human being who has no pecuniary resource adequate to his wants!

Had I possessed at this time any industrial art by which I could honestly have gained money, I should have blessed the hour that disclosed it, what-

ever effort it had exacted of me. But of anything of this sort I was as ignorant as my children themselves.

In this moment of extreme anxiety I received a communication from the executors, reminding me that my son was nearly five years of age, and that the day was close at hand when it would be necessary to remove him from my protection, in pursuance of his father's will. 'It was their intention,' they added, 'to place him at once in the Irish College at Paris, where he would receive an education suitable to the church in which he was born, and to his future prospects in life.'

The sword which had so long been suspended over me, had then, at last, fallen !

That I survived this shock was, perhaps, owing to a sudden thought, which, after some moments of agony, darted into my brain, and which was nothing less than that I would follow my child to Paris ! Could any mother do less than this for her only son, and the heir of her house ? But how accomplish such a purpose ? The unavoidable expense of the experiment seemed at the first glance insuperable, as it would be impossible to create adequate funds, but by sacrifices so great as to absorb everything of disposable value which remained to me ; leaving no resource for any future emergency, how urgent soever it might prove.

But to watch over my child, and occasionally to

see him, though bereft of all power to serve him, was surely an object of sufficient importance, not only to him but to his sisters, to justify the sacrifice of every hoarded superfluity.

Deliberate thought, it is true, showed me the perilousness of thus transporting myself and daughters to a foreign land; but though I shuddered in contemplating the experiment, I did not abandon it. There had once, indeed, been sentiments associated with France which made its very name dear to me; but these had been effaced by the tears of many years, and I now only thought of it as the place which would henceforth contain my son. I should be an alien in Paris, and my lot would thus be cast among strangers. But what mattered it? Was I not a stranger in my own land, and is not 'the poor man,' everywhere, 'separated from his neighbour?'

I had, it is true, one relative in Paris; but it was not very likely that he would recognise me in the lowliness of my present condition. Yet there was a feeling of security in knowing that one of my own blood would be near me, though I might never approach him.

* * * * *

When, at length, my child had been actually wrenched from me, I reasoned, I hesitated no more; and every lion that had hitherto been in my way, disappeared before the impetuous impulse with which,

sleeping and waking, my heart followed him, and I entered upon my preparations for departure with a sort of desperate energy.

But although every impediment seemed thus removed by the ardour of my own purpose, there was still one, which though last considered, had ever been first in my heart—viz., the unavoidable dismissal of my excellent Mary. Not to wound her unnecessarily, I made her the confidant and the judge, both of my embarrassments and my projects; and as her feelings were almost as deeply interested in the welfare of my children as my own, she perfectly acquiesced in the decision I had formed; and to lessen my anxiety at the responsibility incurred by it, she reminded me of all the possible advantages which might arise from our removal; and in her quiet, modest way, enumerated the benefits that must accrue to my daughters from an education in Paris.

She had already spent all her earnings in my service, or nothing could have deterred her from accompanying us, at her own cost. As it was, this proof of her attachment was impracticable, and she buried her regrets in her own heart in silence, that she might not augment mine.

It was not until I had sold both my furniture and plate, that I found it would be necessary also to dispose of the jewellery and trinkets that still remained to me. After these steps had been taken, it was

too late to retreat. But when I found that everything I possessed had been actually disposed of, and no reserve made for any of the contingencies of a perilous experiment, fears and misgivings began again to haunt my pillow, and phantoms of distress to people my dreams. I found it necessary to call up in review every encouraging circumstance that might enable me to sustain the responsibility I had imposed on myself. If I asked the opinion of others, it was in the hope they would applaud my project, rather than remind me of the possibility of its failure—for on this I dared not trust myself to think.

I was quitting my own dear native land, and my family connexions. But what were my connexions to me?—me! whom as a heretic they had cast away as a withered branch from my family tree, and whose very existence many of them seemed to have forgotten. On the Continent I had a mother and sister; and though, like me, they were fettered by the iron hand of poverty, yet, by lessening the distance between us, was I not rendering it possible for me to meet them once more on earth? My two bachelor-uncles were men of fortune, who, though they had yet shown no kindness to me, and very little to my mother and sister since my father's death, might, perchance, bestow on my sweet and blooming children that recognition from which my humiliations had debarred myself.

It was thus I endeavoured to fortify my courage,

and keep alive hopes of success, which fluctuated with every varying hue of a changing sky.

Until my child had actually been transported to Paris, I thought it not prudent to suffer my intention of following him thither to transpire. I have reason, therefore, to believe that the Jesuit was taken by surprise when I wrote a note to apprise him of it, and to request an introduction to the Governor of the College, in proof of my identity, that I might occasionally be admitted to see my child, and satisfy myself of his welfare. The Jesuit's reply was, perhaps, such as I ought to have expected, but I was not prepared for the full extent of its barbarity. He called on me, and coolly told me, that knowing the passionate fondness of my maternal feelings, he had deemed it necessary to provide for the child's future welfare by placing an effectual barrier to my intercourse with him, except by letter.

He presumed not, he said, to suggest any advice respecting my own movements; although, as one of my husband's executors, he could not but desire to see me sustain a deportment suitable to my own superior character, and the dignity of my family and connexions.

I made him no reply; and, seeing me thus inflexible to his admonitions, he quitted me abruptly.

Instantly after his departure, I wrote to a maternal relative, whose ancestors had, some sixty years since, given large bequests to the Irish College in

Paris, in virtue of which their descendants were entitled to certain privileges, in their admission to it. My son was, of course, one of those descendants; and I hoped to learn that this fact might obtain for me the desired occasional interview with him.

My relative replied, that as a parent himself, he could well understand a parent's feeling for so young a child. But he feared that my secession from the Romish church might prove an insurmountable barrier to the indulgence sought; especially as it would be, if granted, a violation of the condition imposed on the college by the executors.

‘Nevertheless, he added, I will furnish you with a letter of identity, which may do something for you, and if you be able to get it signed also by your two maternal uncles, the baron at Vienna and the count at Paris, you may possibly obtain your object, although perhaps under stringent conditions.’

As I knew the influence which my two uncles on the Continent possessed with the officials of the college, I thought myself now in possession of a document that might counteract the influence of the Jesuit.

I therefore entered, with something like hope, upon my final arrangements for my journey, in a small and wretched apartment in the town of —, my cottage having been resigned to another tenant. Let not my reader suppose that, while I was taking counsel of myself and my few friends, I omitted to

ask counsel of God. To what purpose are our efforts to learn and to do his will, if we seek not his divine aid, and obtain not of him by supplication, that inspiration, so undefinable, so imperceptible, yet so certain, that, like the dew on the grass, it fertilizes and sustains the tender blade, which yet exhibits no recognisable proof of its influence.

The expenses incurred in the lodging which I occupied had not been foreseen, and were therefore not included in my estimates ; and as I was unexpectedly detained here a fortnight, I had reason to fear that this drain on the little fund provided for my adventurous journey, might hereafter prove a serious inconvenience to me. But there was no avoiding this expense, or many others not foreseen. Postage at this time was a formidable cost to the poor ; and those to whom I had occasion to write, had no idea that the cost of a letter could be an amount not only to inconvenience, but to embarrass me.

A day or two before our departure, I visited with my children the graves of our household. I had been obliged to leave those of Father Ossory and my infant children without a memorial to indicate their locality ; but how gratifying soever it would have been to me to erect such memorials, it would in my circumstances have been a robbery of the living for the dead. Without the indication of a tomb-stone, however, we found both graves sufficiently marked

and defended, by the groups of flowers growing on them, of which the children gathered a large nosegay from the infant's grave, to strew on the tomb of their father. Precious children ! In the filial sentiments they cherished for him, of whom they knew nothing, they were at once dutiful and happy. The humble grave of the infants, and the splendid tombs of their father and uncle, were some miles apart ; but we accomplished a visit to each. Although I had visited the latter, from a feeling that it was a due which I owed to the dead, previous to what might prove a final banishment from my country, I suffered so much in the fulfilment of it, from the retrospects which it naturally awakened, that I regretted the infliction I had imposed on myself.

It was not grief or tenderness that filled my soul, but a chaos of thoughts, appalling as the spectres of the dead, and revolting to every instinct of my nature. Alas ! I fear they were but impulses of resentment, and that I was not yet subdued to resignation. But nothing creates so much bitterness of heart as a long-continued and unsuccessful struggle with the difficulties of a position into which we have been impelled by the coercion of authority.

As I meditated over my uncle's ashes, now harmless as the dust under my feet, I gazed around for some attesting relic of that resistless power which had wrenched me from the fairest prospects and the dearest ties, to hurl me into an abyss of misery !

But it was nowhere recognisable, except in the debasement of my own condition. I had passed, as had been scornfully foreshadowed, 'from the palace to the hovel,' spite of the costly sacrifice which had been made at my own expense to avert such a fate ! Now, the arbiter of my destiny lay in nothingness, within the marble that enshrined him, unconscious alike of himself and of her whose feelings of grief and destitution were wild enough to evoke compassion from the senseless tenant of his tomb.

If I felt bitterly, as I hung over that tomb, it was that my sorrows traced themselves to him as their source, and my shuddering fear of the future was at that moment stronger than reason, for I was not fancifully, but actually adrift, with two children, on the stormy sea of Adventure. Bound thus to the unknown, and perhaps far-off port of Subsistence, without compass to guide, or rudder to steer my frail bark, it was already pitching about, amidst rocks on one hand and shoals on the other ; while the clouds and darkness that hung over my horizon obscured the future and bewildered my senses.

I returned to my lodging weary and sick at heart, and found a letter there from my uncle Sir Felix, in answer to a farewell which I had addressed to him and my aunt. It informed me that my aunt was suffering from a mortal disease, and was so ill as to require constant attendance both night and day.

He added that her personal attendants, as it an-

noyed her to have strangers about her, had been for some time so perpetually with her as to be nearly worn out. As I had been exerting myself in vain in Ireland, to get Mary into a family of distinction, I wrote to my uncle by return of post, to beg that he would allow her to come to Hanover Square, where I pledged myself she would prove a treasure to my aunt.

My proposal was promptly assented to, and I had the satisfaction in this arrangement of securing for Mary all that I could desire, and at the same time of gratifying her affectionate heart by continuing her in the family. She was speedily ready for her new undertaking, but resolved on not setting out for London, so long as there was anything which she could do for us. She therefore remained to assist our departure.

Rover was left in her care, and my uncle had given her permission to bring him with her to his house, together with whatever else I might wish to entrust to his care.

CHAPTER VIII.

Always from port withheld, always distressed ;
 Me, howling winds drive devious. Tempest tossed—
 Sails ripped—seams opening wide, and compass lost !
 And, every day, some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course !

COWPER.

AT length the moment of departure arrived ; but the parting with Mary had nearly proved fatal to my fortitude : the affectionate creature had pined herself ill beforehand. After we had mounted the vehicle which was to convey us away, she hung on the door of it, crying so bitterly that no one had resolution to remind her she was detaining the carriage. The long-patient driver was at length obliged to use gentle force, to disengage her from her hold. We heard her voice for many minutes after we had moved off, and saw her slender figure riveted to the spot where we had left her, with her hands in an attitude of invocation, until a turn in the road rendered her no longer visible.

I then sank back in the carriage, almost annihilated by the griefs and fears that came rushing on my heart like a torrent. It was in vain I endea-

voured to throw them off; the whole project, at that moment, seemed like an outrage on myself, and the children still left, and still so dear to me. I thought all was lost, and that by a presumptuous stake of things which should have been sacred in my eyes, and exempt from experiment, I had cast away the last consolation of my heart—that of not having been the author of my own and my children's wretchedness.

The enterprise in which I had engaged required a sternness of fortitude that was scarcely in my nature. Yet now, at the moment of commencing it, the ordinary courage of my mind failed me. But I was carried on, in spite of myself, to plunge into untried exile.

Our first stage was to Cork, where I parted, perchance for ever, with my dear native land, whose every grain of earth and weed on the highway became precious in my eyes as I gazed on them for the last time. Ireland — beautiful and beloved — farewell ! Thy history, like mine, is but a record of suffering. Oh, when will the sun of happiness dawn on thee or on me !

We reached Bristol by steam. Everything in England was new to me ; but my attention would not be arrested by anything short of my final destination, otherwise I could not have gazed on the scenery of the Avon, as we sailed up that river to Clifton, without admiration.

We went from Bristol to Southampton, and thence by steam to Havre. The heavens certainly smiled on our landing in France, and I seized on this circumstance as a happy omen; for 'trifles light as air' are sometimes ministers of hope or despair.

Although I had slept while crossing the Channel, I had no difficulty in believing, when I first beheld the quay and streets of Havre from the deck of the boat, that I was looking on a foreign land. Parrots screaming at open doors and windows; *gens-d'armes* stationed at every turn; and women moving about the streets without hats or bonnets, in high Normandy caps, with long lappets, convinced me of this to demonstration. I had, nevertheless, some difficulty in persuading myself that this was France—that country once the theatre of my youthful dreams, and the Arcadia of my imagination.

Often as I had seen it in my mind's eye, and familiar as I had fancied myself with its peculiarities, a single glance falsified all my conceptions of it, and convinced me that no description can impart to the mind adequate and accurate ideas of a country we have never seen.

Havre did not interest me; and having passed through the formalities of the custom-house without impediment, we embarked on the day after our arrival, in the steamboat, *La Duchesse d'Angoulême*, for Rouen. Fanned by gentle gales, and sailing under skies of benignant aspect, everything around

me fostered the hope that at least I had not committed a fatal error in throwing myself and family on the chances of a foreign land.

The scenery of the Seine is beyond description beautiful and varied, and almost inspired me with a feeling of pleasure. The great features of nature, like those of man, are everywhere similar, and the eternity of mountains and valleys speaks to us in a language which the soul can everywhere understand, while it proclaims truths which we discern and reverence.

The sympathy that exists betwixt nature and the soul is more cordial than that betwixt man and man. To this benign and silent listener we unfold our deepest and most passionate griefs; and though she answers not with condolences, she beholds our tears without reproaching our weakness, infuses peace into the troubled breast, and when we sink under our sorrows, receives us into her bosom, and blends our being with her own.

We reached Rouen late in the evening, and the interval of repose which during our passage I had stolen from habitual anxiety, vanished before the crowd that rushed on board the boat as it reached the quay.

I encountered at Rouen, as everywhere else, a thousand difficulties and inconveniences incident to my inexperience, my poverty, and the unprotectedness of my condition; but these I pass over, as well

as the impertinences, not the smallest of my trials, to which I was exposed from the youthfulness of my appearance.

On the following evening I pursued my journey to Paris by *diligence*, and arrived there at midday. Notwithstanding the fatigue attendant on travelling day after day, and the weariness of my spirit, the beauty of the approach to Paris by the Barrière de l'Etoile could not fail to arrest and absorb, for the moment, every faculty.

A refreshing rain, which had fallen during the night, had so renovated both fields and foliage, that in the morning they looked as fresh as in the early spring.

Scenes of beauty were everywhere around me; but when, after quitting Nanterre, we were placed by a sudden turn of the road in full view of that imposing object, the Barrière de l'Etoile, at the extremity of an avenue some miles in length, my admiration was unbounded.

The vehicle stopped as we arrived at the barrière for the customary examination; it was but the business of an instant, and then driving swiftly through the gateway—we were in Paris. Paris! What a thousand undefinable thoughts came over me as I uttered the name, and first raised my eyes to its domes and steeples, holding their lofty heads in sunbeams. Not such sunbeams as those even of our dear little Emerald Isle; but bright and golden rays,

unclouded by smoke or fog. The visions of years were in an instant realized ; and could I have taken account of myself at such a moment, I had described feelings as new as the scenes before me.

Whether I gazed on the objects of nearer interest in the Avenue de Neuilly and the Champs Elysées, or, looking onwards, descried in the distance the forest of trees which indicated the garden of the Tuileries, all was enchantment. As we passed by the Place Louis Quinze, other objects broke in succession on my view ; and the Chamber of Deputies, with its contiguous edifices on the south of the Seine, were, as we drove rapidly on, instantly exchanged for a near view of the noble west gate of entrance to the Tuileries,—the horses in white marble by which it was at this period surmounted, wild with animation, and almost leaping from their pedestals, forming a fine contrast to the automaton figures of the Swiss guards on duty below. It struck me that, for the first time in my life, I beheld city views which more than equalled in beauty the pictures that are made of them.

The artist, by his command of light and shade, and clear atmosphere, and cloudless skies, often throws a degree of beauty over his delineations which destroys resemblance, and excites anticipations that make a mockery of truth. But here, the original surpassed its fairest copy, looking like a land of glorious dreams. Ah ! little knew I then how much

I was destined both to suffer and to enjoy in this region of romance !

My dream of delight was soon at an end. We were driven rapidly through the streets, and set down in the yard of the *Messagerie Royale*. When I found myself and my little girls surrounded and gazed upon by a crowd of strangers, whose language, though I thought myself a tolerable French scholar, was enunciated with a rapidity that rendered it, at first, unintelligible to my distracted senses, I would gladly have shrunk away out of sight.

And as, on a hasty glance over the group around us, I discerned not a single face that I could recognise, nor amongst the many voices a single tone of welcome to me, a shivering feeling of fear came over me that was almost paralysing. My children looked anxiously and askingly in my face, as I endeavoured to collect my thoughts, and decide on the locality to which I should direct my steps.

I was lost in these thoughts as I stood by my luggage and them, assailed by a dozen porters at once, demanding whither I would have the luggage carried. They endeavoured to understand my wishes, but without success ; for although I spoke to them in their own language, my timidity and my foreign accent rendered me unintelligible.

They then quarrelled with each other, and the rival candidates for my favour increased in number. I looked around me in despair, and saw at a short

distance, standing in the yard, a respectably and somewhat fashionably dressed female, gazing on me with an intensity of look that startled me. But the instant my eyes met hers, she turned away, and my attention being at the moment diverted, I lost sight of her.

In the hope of finding some one among the clerks in the coach-office who might be able to speak to me intelligibly, I entered it, and looking round, thought myself fortunate in perceiving an Englishman.

Of course I addressed myself to him in preference. Having gained his ear, he bestowed on me, in reply, that sort of supercilious, examining look, with which Englishmen of his class are accustomed to greet a stranger of dubious rank who requests their civilities. Having surveyed me and my children from head to foot, and I presume found our exterior below his standard of *gentility*, he answered my inquiries in a vague and negligent manner, so as to afford me no assistance whatever. Meanwhile, one of the French clerks, who had been attending to what was passing, politely addressed me, and inquired of what I wished to be informed.

I made him understand, and he instantly desired a porter to lift my luggage into the office ; and having superintended the placing of it, told me that it should be taken care of until I sent for it. The Englishman, unabashed by the reproof which had been given him in the Frenchman's superior courtesy, smiled

affectedly, and went on with his business of the quill.

I then left the coach-yard, and trod for the first time the streets of Paris. I was in possession of the address but of one person in Paris besides my uncle ; and to the residence of this person I now anxiously made my way, hoping that, as she was in an humble rank of life, she might be induced to accommodate me and my children, at least for the moment. I had obtained directions to find the street of her residence from the obliging clerk of the coach-office. It was at a considerable distance from the Rue Notre Dame, in which we had been set down, but having purchased a map of Paris on my way, I had little difficulty in finding it.

Having done so, however, my distress was indescribable on finding the person I sought absent from home, and not expected to return for several months. It would have been madness for me to incur the expense of a public hotel ; and it was impossible that I could present myself and family, uninvited and unknown, at the hôtel of my uncle, the Count de Carryfort, who belonged to a class in society which admitted not of such a freedom.

I clasped my hands in bitter agony, as I turned from the porter's lodge of the house in which I had sought, and hoped to have found, shelter.

We had been travelling the preceding night, and for many days had been irregularly supplied with

meals, and my children looked wretchedly pale and ill. We were in the Rue St. Honoré, near the Rue Royale. The shops of the restaurateurs and confectioners presented their inviting viands at the windows; but I dared not enter them, as I had no money to spare, although the looks with which my children surveyed them touched me to the heart. A few biscuits was all I could afford them. For myself, I could not eat a morsel; a corroding sense of anxiety had taken possession of me, which superseded hunger.

The day, which in September is not long, was wearing fast away, and what might become of us, should night come on before we had found an asylum, was a question which I asked with such vehemence of terror as frightened my children, and caused the elder, who was old enough to feel something of its import, to burst into a fit of crying, that increased my own distress. I knew not which way to turn in the street, but was obliged to move on, as our appearance attracted attention from the passers by; and a crowd was forming round us just as we approached the church of the 'Assomption.' Its doors were open, and, terrified to an excessive degree, I took refuge in it with my children.

As I advanced into the interior of the building, I observed a few humble worshippers devoutly kneeling on the pavement.

The sight of them inspired a feeling of devotion

in my own heart which was irrepressible. They, like me, were perhaps in sorrow, and 'had no comforter;' but, 'God is no respecter of persons,' and he is everywhere 'waiting to be gracious.' Their garb, denoting even greater poverty than mine, awakened sympathy in my heart, and quieted the murmurs of my spirit. I retired to a deep recess, and prostrating myself on the floor with my children, poured out the sorrows of my heart in a torrent of tears and supplication.

Happiest of all human privileges is *that*, which in the day of trouble permits us to call upon God!

I left the church with a composure of mind, which I have always found to succeed sincere and fervent devotion. As my children and I descended the steps, I observed the same female whom I had seen in the *cour* of the Messagerie, and again her gaze was fixed on me. I returned her look; and thought, as I examined her features, there was something Irish about them.

Occupied, however, with my own feelings, I was turning from her, when she abruptly approached me, and uttered my name.

My surprise was very great, as I was sure she was a stranger to me. But in such a moment of isolation, only to hear my name uttered was a circumstance to cause emotion. The reflection of an instant caused me to recoil, until the stranger mentioned the name of one of my Dublin relatives, and informed me at the same time, that she was ac-

quainted with him. The pre-occupied state of my mind prevented me from discerning at the moment the extreme singularity of this rencontre, and the seeming interest of a stranger in my concerns.

Miss Murphy, for that was her name, nothing revolted by my shrinking manner, inquired if I had engaged lodgings; to which I replied that I had not, and that I should be much obliged to her if she could recommend me to any that were suitable for me. Miss Murphy appeared to ponder for a moment on my request, and then, with an air of hesitation, said,—‘Perhaps my mother might be able to recommend you to some place. Our residence is not far distant, and if you will favour me with your company thither, I shall be most happy to introduce you to her. You will find her a countrywoman of your own.’

As we passed along, I learned that she was acquainted with the whole history of my family; and through her correspondence with Ireland, as she said, she had been apprized of everything that had befallen myself.

She was making an attempt at condolence when we stopped at the gate of an hotel in the Rue St. Florentin. She conducted us through a gloomy court-yard, and up a staircase equally gloomy, of which I thought I should never reach the top. The exertion was so painful to me, that I was obliged repeatedly to stop and take breath, while the children

were amusing themselves with pointing out to each other the cobwebs and dirt on the walls and stairs. We at length stopped at a little low door, on the fifth story. It was opened at the ring of a bell, and passing through a small antechamber, we were carried through a suite of three or four rooms, very showily furnished. We were requested to seat ourselves in the last, and Miss Murphy left us alone—when, casting my eyes on a brilliant clock on the mantel-piece, I perceived that it was already four o'clock, and as there were only two more hours of daylight, my impatience for the return of my conductress became extreme. She re-appeared, with her mother on her arm.

Mrs. Murphy was a tall woman, about sixty years of age, with a daring, haughty countenance, and an imperious carriage, that bestowed something of dignity on mean and negligent attire. She approached me with an air of graciousness, as if it were her object to conciliate me ; while a look of rude scrutiny, from a pair of prominent black eyes, made me quail before her.

I checked my rising repugnance, and addressed to her the same inquiry as that which I had already addressed to her daughter.

Without replying to me, she continued surveying me and my children, with so sinister and calculating an expression of countenance, that it was a relief to me when she proposed retiring to consult her daughter.

They withdrew together, and I was again left to survey the apartment, and form vague surmises respecting the apparent incongruity betwixt it and its occupants.

During their absence, my anxiety respecting where we were to find shelter for the night again returned in all its agony, and I felt a momentary wish to remain where we were; yet dreaded lest they should propose it, for a strong and singular repugnance to both mother and daughter had taken possession of me. They were aware of my reduced circumstances, and had mentioned that they personally knew the Count de Carryfort. All this was very unaccountable to me; and, while I was bewildering myself with conjectures, they returned with smiling faces, and, with an air of doing me a great favour, proposed that I should remain with them, until I could be more suitably accommodated. I had but a moment to decide,—for hesitation, I clearly saw, would be an offence, and the thought, where else shall I find a shelter for the night? induced me to accept their offer with as much courtesy as I could command.

They took care to remark, that although they were on the fifth story, there was still a floor betwixt them and the roof, and that in Paris the higher stories were considered more healthy, and quite as *genteel* as the lower. This remark did not interest me, or I should have smiled at its attempt to dupe me. I felt an almost invincible repugnance, without

being able to account for it, to becoming an inmate with Mrs. Murphy and her daughter. But my situation admitted not of the indulgence of fastidious feeling; it was a case of necessity, which abrogated even the ordinary laws of prudence; and having once made up my mind to it, I dismissed all my fears, in commending myself to Divine protection.

Mrs. Murphy had proposed terms which I could not object to. They were, indeed, much lower than I had expected, though still not low enough for my limited resources.

A porter was speedily dispatched for my luggage, and at six o'clock we were summoned to dinner. As this was my first introduction to domestic life in Paris, and I was utterly unacquainted with the usages of any class of its inhabitants, I paid some attention to the quality and arrangement of the dinner.

It was composed of very inferior and ill-cooked food, served with an affectation of ceremony that to me seemed ludicrous; as did also the now gaudy apparel of the mother and daughter, from whom I eagerly escaped, as soon as propriety would allow me, to the chamber appropriated to my use.

Had I been less absorbed in serious cares, I should have found this chamber dreary and comfortless in the extreme. It was a large room, and the discoloured walls and ceiling, from which hung cobwebs of all lengths and breadths, implied that it must have

been unoccupied many months, if not years. A small casement window, so thick with accumulated dust as to render a blind superfluous, and a dark and dirty floor, that seemed not to have been either washed or polished for years, presented a striking contrast to the glittering furniture that I had observed in the salons.

I became gloomily perplexed by the strangeness and want of congruity that evidently reigned throughout the establishment.

But as yet I knew not what to ascribe to local peculiarity, and what to individual taste. A few weeks explained some of the mysteries of the place. I had long been accustomed to the comfortlessness of poverty, or the wretched beds destined to our use would have produced anything but repose.

But we were all too weary to be sensible of our privations ; and our sleep for the first night, at least, was sweet.

On the following day, by bringing into use a few articles which I had brought from home, I was enabled to improve our accommodations.

CHAPTER IX.

My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.
 JOB.

I WAS now, then, at last in Paris, and for the moment in sufficient quiet to take a survey of my position, my resources, and my principal object in coming there, and I lost neither time nor effort in endeavouring to expedite its attainment.

As I had provided myself with vouchers to attest my identity, and substantiate the claims of my family on the college, I wanted but the signatures of my two uncles to render them perfectly presentable.

For that of the Count de Carryfort, it was necessary that I should apply in person. Not to alarm him by an abrupt intrusion, I addressed a note to him, informing him of my intended visit, and the object of it. Although I had every imaginable claim on my uncle, and nothing had ever occurred to produce alienation betwixt us, my note was answered with a coldness bordering on incivility. All recognition of our relationship was carefully avoided, and my request for his signature granted only on condi-

tion that I should not importune him for anything more.

My heart swelled with emotion on the first reading of this note in a foreign land, but my indignation was transient, and I quickly sank into that submission which long continued suffering and repeated disappointment had rendered almost habitual. I had not now to learn that the mere want of assistance is insufficient to obtain it. Nevertheless, my uncle's unkindness deprived me of one of the few remaining resources on which my mind, in speculating on future disasters, had been wont to rest.

I accepted his signature to my Irish testimonial on the condition prescribed, without being admitted to an interview with him, and was thus prevented from making such inquiries respecting the Murphys as he only could have satisfied, since I knew no other person in Paris to whom they were known—if indeed they were known to him, a point which must now remain in doubt.

Before I could proceed a step further in obtaining access to the college, I was obliged to apply to the Murphys for such information as only a resident well acquainted with Paris could furnish. I thus unavoidably revealed to them my anxiety respecting my son, which it had been better to conceal; although indeed I soon found that every attempt at concealing my personal circumstances and anxieties was utterly useless, as, by some unaccountable means, they

obtained information of the precise posture of my affairs, and appeared to know almost every intended movement and project of my thoughts. Yet I could never discover that my locks had been forced, or that any of my papers were missing. I had written to my uncle at Vienna, and, through my dear mother's interposition, had obtained from him an attested document, in aid of that which I had brought from Ireland, and was then enabled by the assistance of the Murphys, which I afterwards found to be treacherous, to present my testimonials to the president of the Irish College, who, having examined them, admitted they were entitled to investigation.

With what anxiety did I await the result of that investigation! Meanwhile, 'thick-coming fears of fondness' often represented my child as languishing for want of a mother's care; and I wandered round and round the walls that I supposed to inclose him, silently invoking protection and blessings on him.

I lost much time in importuning the college officials for the decision, which I supposed would have been immediate, and for permission in the interim to behold my child, if it were but for a moment.

I was at length informed, in reply to my entreaties, that circumstances of a formidable, and, it was feared, of an insurmountable character, had been laid before the council, which rendered it a duty on their part to interdict any intercourse betwixt me and my son.

Nevertheless, it was added, that being unwilling to decide hastily, they had resolved on deferring any further consideration of the case, and even to wave any mention of what formed the impediment to my wishes, unless the Count de Carryfort should personally interest himself in an application for it.

I was quite aware that this amounted to a decided negation of my suit, unless I could prevail on my uncle to comply with the condition prescribed. But how might I find courage again to intrude upon him with a petition. In debating this question, I discovered that all I had hitherto suffered had been ineffectual to empty my heart of its native pride.

It was bitterness and gall, after my uncle's interdiction, in which I had tacitly acquiesced, to endeavour again to force myself upon his notice. But there was no alternative, unless I relinquished altogether the only object that had brought me to Paris.

I had never seen my uncle, which increased the difficulty of applying to him; nor was it possible for me to think of the unkindness of so near a relation, without great diffidence of myself, and a desponding appreciation of that personal influence with which I was to attempt obtaining his sympathy in my maternal griefs. I recollected having once been told that the count resembled my mother. This recollection heightened the dread I had of encountering him; for how could I endure disdain from a countenance resembling my mother's? Yet this dreaded visit

must be made. As I arrived at this conviction, I made instant preparation for it, and was soon on my way to the Rue d'Anjou.

When I reached the count's hotel, the saddest apprehensions filled my heart; and on hearing from the porter that his master was at home, I was seized with a panic that almost induced me to run away without my errand. Nevertheless, I suffered myself to be led to a superb saloon, in which, as the servant shut the door, I found myself alone. As I caught a glimpse of my pale and terrified face in one of the large mirrors that hung on the walls, I thought it must of itself insure my failure, for it was so ghastly as to startle myself. I chose first one seat, then another, endeavouring in vain to put myself at ease. Too soon I heard approaching footsteps; and starting up, ran forward, not knowing what I did, and met a gentleman near the door, as it was thrown open by a servant to admit him. One glance told me who he was, and I exclaimed, with irrepressible emotion, 'My uncle!'

Before he could reply, I had thrown myself at his feet, and seizing one of his hands, unconsciously bathed it with the tears that happily came to my relief.

A brief explanation followed, for I had omitted giving my name to the servant. But my uncle, in his turn, had recognised lineaments, which he frankly owned were not to be mistaken. I had, however, taken

him by surprise, and thrown him off his guard ; and his second thoughts, I instantly perceived, had made an offence of this freedom. He disengaged his hand, and desiring me to rise, motioned me to a seat.

‘ You are Mrs. Fitzgerald, I presume, madam, from whom, some weeks since, I received a note, whose request I promptly complied with, but on a condition which, I think, your presence here has already violated. I know not what your business may be in Paris, madam ; it is a long way from Ireland, for an unprotected woman to come with a family of children, and your *début* in this gay city has been made under dubious circumstances. I presume not, however, to call you to account. I am not invested with any right to do so ; and you must consider what I have said rather as a soliloquy extorted by surprise, than as anything meant for your ear.’

‘ My dear uncle,’ said I—but seeing him frown, I added—‘ I beg your pardon, Monsieur de Carryfort, will you permit me to mention to you, briefly, the causes and the objects of my coming to Paris?’

‘ No, madam. You need not give yourself that trouble. I have already heard of the Marquis de Grammont ; and can imagine everything you may choose to tell me.’

‘ The Marquis de Grammont ! Oh ! what has *he* to do with my coming to Paris ? I know not even if he is in existence, and it is many years since I

have heard the mention of his name. Nor has it, in those years, ever once passed my lips until this moment !’

My uncle smiled contemptuously. ‘But I am told you are mistress of the pen, Mrs. Fitzgerald ; and that little magical instrument is often endowed with convenient potency.’

‘I know not what you would say, sir ; but it is evident to me, that you have in some way been misinformed respecting me and mine. Shall I intrude too long on you, if I recount the principal events of my wretched life ? You appear to know something of my early years,’—here he abruptly interrupted me with—

‘Where are you living, Mrs. Fitzgerald ?’

‘With persons of the name of Murphy—an Irish-woman and her daughter, residing in the Rue St. Florentin ; who tell me, they have the honour of being known to you.’

‘Known to me ?’ repeated he, fiercely and disdainfully. ‘May I trouble you to mention your business here with me this morning, Mrs. Fitzgerald ; and I must request you to do so quickly.’

He looked at me, while saying this, with an expression so severe, that I saw there was no possibility of extending my stay a moment longer, unless I instantly complied with his requirement. My business was soon told, and as soon disposed of ; for he abruptly and decidedly declined any further

effort for me with the college; adding, he knew not but that in coupling his name with mine he had already compromised its respectability. This observation fell on me so crushingly, and with so mysterious an air, as to inflict a species of distress stunning and entirely new to me. I rose to go, but trembled so exceedingly, that without asking permission, I again sat down. Not a tear came to my aid; nor could I force a syllable from my lips, for my heart swelled almost to suffocation. The count, seeing the overwhelming effect of his last remark, said, in a milder tone—‘There are mysteries in your life, madam,—I wish there were not. It is too late to bid you beware of your associates, or to tell you that a woman is judged of by her domestic and chosen inmates. I beseech you to believe, that I have no intention whatever to interfere at all in your concerns; otherwise, I should say, that a young woman of character and delicacy, as your appearance is specious enough to imply, is generally prudent in the choice of her residence. I have been told that you fell into poverty in Ireland—and poverty is, I allow, a palliation for many omissions, both to ourselves and others. But there are wrongs to ourselves, which not even poverty may palliate.

‘Excuse me, madam, I can hear no reply. The information on which I have been induced to make these remarks is of too indubitable a nature for me to hesitate a moment in giving credence to it. I

therefore ought not to have said what I have said ; and lest your appearance and your visible distress should lead me into further wrong, I will bid you adieu. When you are sufficiently composed to depart, you will ring the bell.' With these cutting words, and a manner at once stern and gloomy, he rose to go.

Wrought up almost to madness by the dishonour with which his mysterious words seemed to cover me, and unable to speak, I sprang forward, making supplicating gestures to detain him. With a repulsive wave of the hand, he darted out of the room, closing the door after him.

I did not remain long where he had left me, but, with as much speed as I could make, regained my wretched chamber on the fifth floor. Fortunately, I found myself alone there ; for at that moment I could not have endured the sight even of my children without an increase of my suffering. I fastened my door, and, with a feeling of unutterable anguish, threw myself prostrate on the floor.

It was neither in humility nor in resignation that I did this, but my whole soul was filled with a sense of wrong so oppressive, that I was an insupportable burden to myself.

I had been long inured to adversity, but dishonour had never in any shape been mingled with it. Its tainted breath had never before poisoned my respiration, or uttered my name. I had made a league

with Poverty, and taken Sorrow to my arms. Neglect was my familiar, and Humiliation my sister. But with an evil like this, I could make no compromise, nor knew I how to deal with it; for in taking a survey, as I had sometimes done, of the mortifying possibilities of my future lot, I had never thought of this.

What had I not hoped from this interview! The ties of blood can never be broken, and as we advance in life, and death diminishes the circle of our relatives, we cling closer and closer to those that remain. I had never seen my uncle until now, still I felt that he was mine—that he was my mother's brother; and although his unkindness on my first arrival had destroyed all dependence on him as a friend, the thought of seeing him had inspired the hope of awakening him to a sense of what he was to me, and what was due to himself, in his unfortunate niece.

Hopes and recollections that had for years slumbered in my soul, had been awakened. But to what purpose, except to sharpen the pain which his most mysterious and offensive words had inflicted on me? The more I aimed at discovering his meaning, the more I was bewildered. Why had Monsieur de Grammont's name been introduced? Still more, why was it offensively introduced? But these queries could only be replied to by the bewildering suggestions of fancy, for which, in the impenetrable dark-

ness that surrounded me, there was no sphere. A review of the cruel part which my uncle had borne in our interview, drew at length bitter tears from me ; and, compelled as I now was to resign, perhaps for years, if not for ever, all hope of ministering to the welfare of a beloved child, and losing thus the object for which I had become an exile, I would fain have returned to Ireland, and buried myself and my griefs in my parent earth. But this was impossible ; and after many hours of almost suspended life, I revived to a sense of the pressing duties that remained to me, and to a new perception of the treasures still left me in my little girls.

In recurring to the mysterious words of my uncle, it was quite evident that something must be wrong in the residence which I had chosen, and it was some relief to me to arrive at certainty on any point. Hitherto I had lived so much apart from the Murphys that I scarcely knew more of their pursuits than on the first day of becoming their inmate. I had, indeed, no leisure for observing their movements. But it was now a duty to myself to learn what was passing around me. Thus occupied, I became a perpetual prey to misgivings, and suspicious of every movement that took place. Very soon I had an opportunity of observing occurrences in the salons of Mrs. Murphy, which I now began occasionally to enter, that explained in some measure the vague and alarming insinuations of my uncle. There were,

I knew from the first, frequent assemblies there ; but I supposed them to be simply *réunions* of her friends and neighbours ; and as I dreaded nothing so much as growing into familiarity with my hostesses and their acquaintances, I always secluded myself at such times strictly within the precincts of my own chamber.

Now, however, I paid a diligent attention to everything that was passing, and soon discovered that the evening amusement of the house consisted in gambling ; and I had reason also to suspect, that the parties were frequented by persons of disreputable character.

In the first moments of my surprise and alarm, I imprudently expressed to the Murphys themselves the horror that I felt at the discovery, and decidedly told them I could no longer remain in their house. They replied with disdain and defiance, demanding of me immediate payment of the debt I had incurred for my board and lodging with them. This demand, though of small amount—having paid my first month in advance—touched me sorely, as I was unable to comply with it, in consequence of not having received from Ireland a remittance which had been due several weeks.

In my next interview with Mrs. Murphy, she insultingly offered to compromise with me, on condition that I would join her evening assemblies. Stung to the quick by such a proposal, I declined

it with too visible a contempt. After this the Murphys threw off all restraint on their manners; every courtesy was abandoned, and their resentment of the stand I had taken was visible in every part of their demeanour. Under these circumstances, as my remittance did not arrive, I saw complete destitution marching on me with giant strides. My nights were passed without sleep, my days in that sickness of heart which arises from 'hope deferred.'

In the streets I saw persons of all ages and conditions pursuing their respective objects, and I envied even the menial labourer his lot. How gladly would I have cast off every vestige of a superior condition, could I by so doing have gained an exemption from the corroding cares which an uncertain subsistence entailed. I doubted not that *my* hands might be taught to do whatever others' had done before me; but I had not yet arrived at the point which constrained me to the experiment of manual labour.

I subsequently discovered that even this was an art, all easy as it seemed untried, that required early initiation, and that it would be less difficult for me, who had been reared in deplorable ignorance of it, to die of want, than to acquire a successful knowledge of it. The discovery which I had made of the hateful character of Mrs. Murphy's house, kept me in a perpetual fever of desire to leave it; but no remittance came, and I was compelled to stay until I could discharge my debt there.

Both mother and daughter made frequent remarks, reminding me how much I was in their power. Indeed, I began to think that I ought to feel obliged to them, for their forbearance in allowing me to remain, after the affront they had received from me respecting their evening amusement.

To give myself occupation, and divert my thoughts, I began to put into some form a diary, which I had kept for many years, but which hitherto consisted of loose fragments, that had been written at various periods, to shorten the hour of suffering or fill up an interval of leisure.

My uncle's mysterious hints had shown me, in a new and strong light, the isolation of my lot, and the defencelessness of my position, in some of their worst consequences. By arranging a history of my early life, I should not only be making a record of its occupations and pursuits, in an accessible and durable form, which would protect me against misrepresentation, but it would afford me at this trying period a sphere of thought that would remove me from the scenes and occurrences around me. I entered on it without delay, that I might not be wanting to myself in efforts to preserve some composure of mind, although I continued under the most distracting apprehensions.

CHAPTER X.

My soul with horror from this dwelling flies,
 And seeks some tranquil, solitary place,
 Where grief may finish life's unhappy race !

MRS. TIGHE.

THE Murphys now kept no measures with me, but practised a systematic persecution, which daily revealed some new source of disquiet and alarm. Still the postman brought me no advice of my draft, and being almost entirely out of funds, I had nothing to oppose to any outrage offered me, except unavailing remonstrance for what they considered they had a right to inflict, or an occasional show of courage that had no existence in my heart.

In making my pecuniary estimates before I left Ireland, I was not aware that the practice in Paris, both in schools and lodging-houses, was that of payment in advance. I had paid a month in advance to Mrs. Murphy on my first arrival, and not being prepared for this call, I had been embarrassed by it ; the more so as my remittance from Ireland had been so long delayed.

Except occasionally, I had never, since I had been with the Murphys, accustomed myself to go

out, even to the Protestant church, without being accompanied by one of them, or informing them where I was going ; and they had made it a point that I should not do so, under pretence of its being dangerous to me as a stranger. But as I was no longer a stranger, there was no reason for this restraint, and I resolved on going out, for the future, without previously giving any account of my intended movements.

My children and myself were accustomed to be narrowly watched ; but we were so fortunate one fine morning as to quit our prison without being seen to depart. Being resolved to extricate myself if possible from my present position, I made my way with rapid steps to a boarding-school not far distant, where I had been informed that English *pensionnaires en chambres* were received on very moderate terms. I soon made an agreement, satisfactory to myself, with Madame de Corbière, the mistress of the establishment, and engaged to enter on my term with her as soon as I was in possession of the necessary funds.

To facilitate this, I went, instantly on, quitting her house, to call on the banker, to whom I had been apprized that my letter of credit would be addressed. I should have taken this step before, had I not been dissuaded, and even prevented from it, by the Murphys.

On making my inquiries at the bank, I was informed that the letter of credit in question had

long since been received, and paid to the person in whose favour it had been drawn. It is impossible for me to describe my surprise and consternation at this intelligence. I immediately demanded an audience of the principal of the bank, who showed me a receipt for the amount of the draft, to which my name was affixed.

His astonishment was not much less than my own, when I assured him that I had never employed any one to receive the money, and that the name affixed to the receipt, though mine, was not of my writing. I moreover told him that the draft had never been at all in my possession, it having never come to hand ; in short, that I knew nothing whatever of the transaction. The questions of the banker were close and shrewd, and although a countryman of my own, a sort of distrust hung on his brow, which augmented my panic, for I thought myself at once irretrievably ruined.

The frankness of my communications appeared to dispel his first doubts ; but on learning my place of residence his countenance again clouded, the name of the Murphys seeming to have a disagreeable effect on him. I saw that I was disparaged, if not even condemned, by the very mention of it. The principal object for me, however, was to ascertain who had done me this wrong. As there was no one in Paris who could have had the knowledge or the power to do it except the Murphys, my suspicions

naturally fell upon them. But I had self-command enough to suppress any mention of them at this moment; nevertheless, the banker himself, at the close of our interview, appeared to have arrived at the same conclusion as myself, and telling me that I might expect a visit from him in the course of the following day, he withdrew to his private room.

I hastily quitted the office to return to the Rue St. Florentin. My dread of meeting the Murphys, after the information I had acquired, was very great, and was only controlled by the conviction of its immediate necessity, and the terror of soon finding myself and family houseless and destitute. It is impossible for any one unacquainted with destitution such as mine, to listen with interest to the mention of the many fearful fancies that haunted me, as I retraced my steps with my two children to the detested habitation of the Murphys.

When I reflected that I had it not in my power to confront them with any proof of the wrong, which I had no doubt they had done me, or to claim from them a restitution of what was so essential to my existence, while it was so easy, and would be so gratifying to them, to inflict on me the penalty of a debtor, I saw no escape from their power. What if I should be taken from my children and immured in a debtors' prison? But this was a contingency so hideous, that I would not allow myself to contemplate it. A crisis was certainly approaching, and

come what might, perhaps I ought to feel hope rather than despair, and reversing the maxim, 'All change is evil,' exclaim, any change for me must be a benefit!

It was one o'clock before we found ourselves mounting the long flights of stairs to our fifth *étage*. As we reached the top, we saw two ill-looking men in the act of taking leave of the Murphys, at the exterior door of their ante-chamber. As the men retreated down the stairs, I encountered the mother and daughter, whose countenances exhibited a consternation which at first sight made me suspect they had already heard from the banker. I was aware that I met the glance of Mrs. Murphy with too visible an agitation; but I had never been successful in the art of concealing my emotions, and my mind was at that moment on the rack of apprehension.

Both mother and daughter stood in the doorway as we attempted to pass, without yielding an inch; and as I was exhausted by mounting the stairs, I retreated, and leant on the balustrade for support. Our having gone out without the knowledge of the Murphys, was evidently an offence which they were determined to resent, and formed an addition to the numerous transgressions already registered against me.

Their looks were menacing, as Mrs. Murphy said, 'You have been abroad this morning, madam—you are really growing very independent. What a mortification it must be to you that you cannot sustain

your independence by paying your debts! Take care—I know all you are doing; but you will not be able to escape me. You are not yet out of my house, nor shall you go, but by my leave; and if you do not wish to find yourself in the hands of a jailor, you will make no further attempt at it. You and I can never be friends, Mrs. Fitzgerald; but I do not yet wish to go to extremities with you, unless you provoke me to do so.'

These words seemed to give substance to the shadowy forms of evil that were hovering over me, and my nerves were in some degree braced, by the necessity of contending with a stern reality. It was evident that Mrs. Murphy intended to exert such power over me as a creditor might lawfully use over a debtor; but what I had just learnt at the bankers, if it could be proved against her, might rescue me from her grasp, and place her as a criminal in the power of the law.

This thought, amounting almost to certainty, passed hurriedly through my mind, and enabled me to say to her, though in a faltering voice, 'I am certainly your debtor, madam, for nearly a month's board and lodging, which, according to the custom of Paris, should have been paid in advance. That it has not been, is my misfortune, not my fault. Why I have been disappointed of the remittance I have so long expected, and which would have enabled me to cancel my debt, you perhaps know better than I do.'

I was able, as I uttered these words, to look full at Mrs. Murphy, and to perceive that her countenance fell under my glance, with a consciousness so decided as not to be mistaken.

She turned away with a quick movement, took her daughter's arm, and they walked off together, without a word of reply.

I made my way to my own chamber, and threw myself on the bed, where I remained some time, so lost in vague terrors as to be nearly insensible to the presence of my two dear children, who were hovering about me, and wiping away the tears which happily came to my relief.

'To-morrow,' it is said, 'is nowhere to be found, except, per chance, in the fool's calendar;' and yet on this contemned to-morrow, all my hopes of respite from destruction were now built—for had not the banker promised to come 'to-morrow' in person, to search out—perhaps to rectify, the wrong that had been done me? I endeavoured to dismiss the thought of this eventful 'to-morrow' by caressing and playing with my children, who responded to my feelings with a sweetness that fell like the dew of heaven on my heart. But they wanted their brother Frederic, they said, that mamma might kiss him too, and that they might tell him what he ought to do for her when he was a man.

Thus reminded of my lost child, and dubious of what the next hour might produce, I took my two

girls in my hand, and went towards the Irish College, that I might afford to them and myself the gratification of imagining that we were near the little prisoner within its walls.

As we walked round the building, I observed, not far from us, a person whose outline so resembled that of the 'Jesuit Executor,' that I hastened to come up with him, resolved to implore him on the spot, for a sight of my child.

As he looked behind him, I fancied he must have recognised me, for he instantly quickened his pace, and turning a corner, was out of sight in a moment, so that I was left unable to ascertain his identity.

When we returned to the Rue St. Florentin, it was nearly six o'clock, and the Murphys, as usual, at the ringing of the door-bell, were at hand to ascertain who entered. They did not fill the doorway as in the morning, but scowled at us terrifically as we passed, though without any verbal discourtesy.

My children were suffering for want of something to eat, and as there were no visible preparations for dinner, I began to fear that I was to be starved into submission to my persecutors. At seven, however, an hour later than usual, we were summoned to the dinner-table. Not a word of greeting passed on either side as we met; but I moved to them as I took my seat at the table, a courtesy which they did not acknowledge, and we soon despatched a very unsavoury dinner.

When the cloth had been withdrawn, Miss Murphy rose, and my children left the table to amuse themselves elsewhere. Mrs. Murphy and I were left alone. I had been in a deep reverie for some minutes, with my eyes cast to the ground, when, on raising them, I met a full and piercing stare from my opposite companion. She looked as though she would destroy me with a glance, and trample me under her feet afterwards. I was roused by the frightful expression of her face into a sense of some immediate danger; and gathering up the fragments of my courage, looked at her calmly, but inquiringly.

She understood my look, for she ejaculated, 'By Jupiter, what daring; for *you*, indeed, most wonderful! You wish to know, no doubt, how much longer I will house and feed you, without payment of costs? Your time is short; nor can you now hide from my vengeance in *secret passages*, or *haunted rooms*, or *whistle dogs* or *soldiers* to your rescue, or call ——'

When she had proceeded thus far, she stopped short, with a sudden jerk of the voice, rose from the table, nearly overturned it with a shove, and strode out of the room.

While she had been thus speaking, in tones and gestures certainly unusual to her, I received so strong an impression of her identity with Margaret Brian, that I was nearly petrified by the discovery. I had never seen Brian, and only remembered that a description of her person, which had once been made

to me, answered so exactly to Murphy herself, as she had appeared on this occasion, that I could arrive at no other solution of the enigma she presented, than that she was Brian herself. The difference of names seemed an impediment to this conclusion; but the assumption of a feigned name was easy to a person like her. Besides, had she not recurred to the very circumstances attending the discovery of the incendiary plot against Mulgrave Castle? And who but Brian could have known of its 'secret passages,' and 'haunted rooms,' and other particulars which she had alluded to? The inference from all this was too strong to be resisted.

Was I then under the roof, and in the power of a woman who for years had hung like a vampire on my father's life, and who had so often threatened destruction to his whole family? A burglar, who had haunted and robbed our house of its most costly treasures? An incendiary, who had plotted its destruction, and that of its whole household, by fire? Was it to this being I had entrusted my life, and the lives of my children? Oh! in such keeping, who could count on safety? Not a life amongst us was worth a twelve hours' purchase. And yet we were in her power, so fast, there seemed to be no possible escape for us, except that ignis-fatuus of 'to-morrow' should bring a rescue.

I rose from my seat in haste, to seek my children, and retire with them to my own chamber. It was

now eight o'clock, and in another hour, perhaps, the accustomed guests, from whom I shrank as from a horde of basilisks, might be assembled in the *salons*.

I locked and bolted myself into my room, and put my children to bed. Believing as I did, even more firmly as I continued to reflect on its proofs, that I had discovered Brian in my hostess, I commended myself and my children to God with a throbbing heart, and lay down without taking off my clothes, fearing that the consciousness which Murphy herself must on reflection feel, that she had divested herself of all disguise, might induce her to commit some immediate outrage on us.

I continued long awake; and thought made its usual circuit through the troubled regions of both past and present, labouring to trace to its real cause my calamitous lot.

Could it lie amongst the compulsory and false vows that had been uttered at the altar? Perchance the guilt lay there?

Yet as the soft breathing of my lovely sleeping children reached my ear, did I not bless the Divine Giver of such gifts?—Did I not pray, and strive to live for them? What greater boon, had I been alone in the world, could I have received, at this most frightful crisis of my life, than death? Yet I desired intensely still to live, that I might shield them from the evil world around them!

As the night wore on I must have fallen asleep,

for all at once I was roused to consciousness by the distant sound of voices in the remote *salons*, which rose and fell, in stifled harshness, through the closed doors.

As they occasionally opened, the raised tones of one discordant voice, louder than all the others, arrested my attention as a reminiscence of one I had heard before. While memory was busy in endeavouring to recal the original, I fell into a troubled sleep and dream, from which I awoke trembling and gasping for breath. I sat up to recover myself, when a door suddenly burst open, and a rush of feet was heard entering the ante-chamber of my room.

Then, voices rose in loud tones of passion, and rang around the walls—a fierce struggle followed outside my door, which threatened every moment to burst it open. As, however, I knew it to be securely fastened, I kept myself tolerably tranquil. Amongst various other sounds, I heard distinctly the hard and peremptory tones, and the distinct articulation of Mrs. Murphy. She was endeavouring to control the tempest around her ; but her efforts were vain.

Over the top of my room-door there was a range of glass panes, through which, on the opposite wall of my chamber, flickered the moving lights outside, and then the shadows of human heads, in quick succession traversing each other, fell on it for a moment, and were gone again. Amongst these, was an outline so like that of the Jesuit, as to add to the

mysteries around me. Suddenly the struggle of personal violence ceased, and an instant after the confused vociferation also ceased, leaving only a low moaning sound from a single voice, close at my door, which said—‘I’m not dead—I shall yet avenge myself! Give me back my gold—I say, give it me back—or take the consequences.’ This was followed by a deep groan and a moment of silence. As the words, though in a gasping and feeble tone, had been uttered in English, I detected the peculiar enunciation of the Irish parish priest.

No doubt now remained with me of who were my inmates; but, as if to make assurance doubly sure, I heard Mrs. Murphy say, ‘Patrick Connor, you are under my roof, and I will teach you——,’ the remainder was said in a whisper; but the moaning man replied, in a sharp, broken tone, ‘Jewels! did you say?—jewels? By St. Patrick himself, but you shall answer for that!’

As this last menace spent itself on the air, an outbreak of voices succeeded, in French, some of which proposed to bear the priest into an interior room, and lay him on a bed. He protested against it, but his resistance was vain, although he swore that, as he did not want to die, he would not remain under Murphy’s roof.

But the ruling spirit was there, and he was carried off. In a minute after the ante-chamber was forsaken, and the lights had departed.

The night seemed very long, although it had been thus broken, and I did not sleep again until worn out with thought.

The discovery of the preceding evening had shown me a mine under my feet, and revealed the causes of that blight which had fallen on every effort I had made for the benefit of my family since I had been in Paris. From the first moment of my arrival, and long before, this (would-have-been) assassin of the inmates of my cottage was keeping close vigil on me, and spreading toils for my feet, into which my exigences and my inexperience led me blindfold.

Since then, her intrigues for my ruin had been going on with headlong success. My funds embezzled by her—myself her debtor—and my name dishonoured! Where might all this end? I had now no doubt that the mysteries at which my uncle had hinted were written fabrications of hers, to prevent his acknowledgment of me. That she could never have been admitted to his presence was evident. But with her notorious talent for letter-writing, it was easy to believe that she had assailed both my uncle and the council of the college with statements and forgeries of atrocious import respecting me and mine, so that neither the one nor the other cared to divulge them.

The outline of the Jesuit, which I had seen shadowed on the wall through the glass panes, was an appalling fact; and recollecting that I had, as I

believed, seen the Jesuit himself, when walking with my children in the precincts of the Irish college, I had not a doubt but that he was living in Paris. A new and fearful mystery was thus created to augment my terrors, for if it was indeed he who was one of the revellers of the night, there must be some intimate connexion betwixt him and the Murphys, and I was again, when least prepared to defend myself, 'in the grasp of the priests.'

CHAPTER XI.

The angelic band strict vigil keeps ;
Above, below, amidst, around,
They float in air, or walk the ground,
Leave their bright mansion in the sky,
And watch the world with sleepless eye.

CUNNINGHAM.

ABOUT eight in the morning, I awoke at the sound of a loud ring at the exterior door of the dwelling. When it was opened, high words were heard, but they were not intelligible. I was very anxious to despatch the business of the toilet for myself, that I might be able to perform it also for my children, for I felt that we ought to be ready for any contingency that might occur.

As I opened my door to receive from the servant an article which I had rung for, I perceived that everything in the ante-chamber was in great disorder, and some deep stains, apparently of blood, near my door, had been recently attempted to be washed away from the floor.

The exterior door of this room, which led out of it to the stairs, stood partially open, and through the opening I saw two men, having the appearance of policemen, stationed outside, as if on service. At

the sight of them my heart died within me, for it struck me that they might be there on *my* account.

Oh, how I longed for some ear into which I might have poured out my anxieties and whispered my fears. My eldest child was indeed eight years of age, but it was impossible to think of torturing her young heart with the feelings of mine. No; in such an extremity there is but One, to whom we may utter all the extravagance of our terrors.

I had so often proved the efficacy of imploring Divine aid, that after having again sought it, I wondered I had deferred for a moment to do so.

It was the month of November, and though the weather had been up to this period unusually fine for nearly two months that I had been in Paris, it now began to feel chilly, and the atmosphere was dark and heavy. On this morning especially, the day seemed so reluctant to advance, that one might well have feared it would never return.

Immediately on retiring to my room after breakfast, without having seen the Murphys or heard anything of them, a servant tapped at my door, to tell me that a gentleman waited to speak with me. I hoped and supposed it might be the banker, and immediately went to him in the *salle à manger*.

It was not the banker, but a little mean-looking man, though tolerably habited, who, on asking if I were Mrs. Fitzgerald, without waiting for an answer, advanced, and seized me by the wrist. I naturally

recoiled, and endeavoured to withdraw my hand ; but his grasp was so violent and painful that I burst into tears at the insult. Recovering myself, however, in a moment, I said—‘ I am so unfortunate as not to know you, sir ; why do you thus grasp my arm ?’

‘ Madam, I beg your pardon, it is my duty only that could induce me to make myself disagreeable to you. But I see that you are a *lady*, and will therefore not take advantage of me if I leave you free.’

So saying, he let go my arm, which was already swollen with the violence of his pressure. He stood before me with a scrutinizing look for several minutes, while I endeavoured, by calling every motive to my aid, to brace my nerves, and be prepared for whatever might follow. As he continued to look at me without speaking, I said to him—‘ May I inquire your business with me, sir ?’

‘ My business, madam, is an unpleasant one ; and the more so, as I did not expect to meet with exactly such a person as yourself. However, I must do my duty.’

‘ And what is that, sir ?’ I asked, despondingly.

‘ Why, indeed, madam, you must excuse me for the present. Mrs. Murphy will, no doubt, soon be here, and perhaps she will answer your question. It is her affair ; but—I may perhaps ask you if you are not her debtor, and whether she has not many times asked you for payment of a small amount due to her, without success ?’

I made no reply, but these questions revealed at once the measure of my calamity. It was evident that I was about to be incarcerated. I did not, however, suffer myself to sink ; but still hoped for the arrival of the banker, and at every sound turned to look for him.

But my questioner did not forget that I had not replied to his inquiries. They were, therefore, repeated in another form, and I related to him the exact position in which I stood with Mrs. Murphy.

Having been thus frank with him, I thought I might venture to ask his name ; for as yet I had no idea whom he might be.

‘ My name, madam,’ he said, ‘ is Le Soutien,’ and he handed me his card.

I again inquired, ‘ Are you an attorney, sir ?’

‘ I am, madam.’

‘ Are you, then, employed in that capacity to demand the debt I owe Mrs. Murphy.’

‘ I am, madam.’

‘ And if I cannot pay it—what then, sir ?’

Having said this, I burst into tears.

‘ Oh, do not weep, madam. Your debt must be a very small affair. Surely you have something which you could turn into money for the discharge of it ?’

‘ I fear not, sir.’

‘ How long have you been with Mrs. Murphy, madam ?’

‘ Not quite two months, sir.’

‘And you have never paid her anything since you have been with her?’

‘Only for one month’s board, sir; which I paid in advance, on my first arrival here.’

‘My instructions, madam, are for two months’ board for three persons. If you have your bill and receipt for the month you have paid, perhaps you would be good enough to show it to me?’

I turned to fetch the document from my own chamber, when he again seized my wrist, saying—‘I must not lose sight of you, madam,’ and thinking it unavailing to resist, I suffered him to go with me as far as the door of my room. I there paused, saying, as I did so—‘This is my sleeping-room, you cannot, therefore, enter here. But I will return to you in a moment.’

To which he replied, sharply—‘If you will not let me enter with you, madam, neither can I let you enter alone.’

‘Am I then your prisoner?’ I inquired.

‘Not precisely that. But the moment that forbearance is at an end, there are two policemen on the outside of that door,’ pointing to the outer door, ‘to whose protection I shall be obliged to commend you, unless you can avert it by propitiating Mrs. Murphy.’

As he said this, I could forbear no longer, but in spite of all my efforts to avoid it; a smothered scream of horror burst from me. At this critical moment,

a loud ring at the entrance door startled the lawyer. He instantly loosed his hold, and at the same instant I rushed into my chamber, and locked myself in with my children. They had heard my scream, and seeing my tears, threw themselves crying into my arms.

I remained thus for several minutes, in an embrace too agonising for me to write of, without feeling afresh the worse than deathlike anguish of a mother about to be torn from her children, under such circumstances as mine.

But there seemed no pause in the action of events; for before we had become at all tranquil, a tap at my door announced that another gentleman, Mr. O'Callaghan, the banker, waited to see me in the *salon*.

I instantly disengaged myself from my children, and rose to attend him, although trembling with an undefinable mixture of hope and fear, as though, in doing so, I were either about to consummate my evil destiny or to emancipate myself from the power of Mrs. Murphy.

I entered the *salon* with a timidity more like that of a criminal than an accuser. No fixed purpose was in my thoughts; nor could I conjecture what part I might be called to bear.

The Murphys were already there, looking with fierce astonishment and ill-concealed anxiety. They occupied a sofa at the upper end of the room, and the banker was sitting at a table in the centre of it,

with ink and paper before him, while a clerk stood at his elbow, awaiting his commands. He rose at my entrance, and advancing towards me, said in a low voice—‘Before I can proceed in the business which brings me here, madam, it is necessary that I should have a few minutes’ conversation with you in private.’

I moved, scarcely knowing whither, towards the *salle à manger*, where, encountering my would-be jailor, M. Le Soutien, I was at a loss to know what to do with him, as the banker had requested to speak to me alone. But Mr. O’Callaghan disposed of him very summarily, by saying—‘are *you* here, Le Soutien? Be good enough to retire for a few minutes to the antechamber.’ As Le Soutien left the room, Mr. O’Callaghan closed the door after him, and handed me to a chair. He then took a seat, and addressing me with a courtesy of manner quite unexpected, said—‘After you left my office, madam, two days ago, your name struck me as one that I ought to be acquainted with. I hope you will pardon the liberty I take, when I beg to know if you are related to the late Mr. Frederic Fitzgerald, of Beech Park, in the county of ——, Ireland?’

‘I am the widow of Mr. Fitzgerald, of Beech Park.’

He started from his seat, exclaiming—‘Can it be possible! Mr. Fitzgerald married a daughter of the late Sir William Mulgrave!’

‘I am that unhappy person.’

‘Have I then the honour of addressing a daughter of Sir William Mulgrave, and Mrs Fitzgerald, of Beech Park?’

He clasped his hands together, and looking round the room, exclaimed—‘How is it possible, madam, that a lady of your condition can have lived in this house.’

Recollecting what Monsieur de Carryfort had said respecting the dubious character of the Murphys, I felt it necessary, in order to defend myself from probable injurious inferences, frankly to mention my reduced circumstances, and to state with what views I had come to Paris—my disappointment on the day of my arrival, and the pressure of difficulties under which I had been compelled to accept a temporary shelter in Mrs. Murphy’s house.

‘I had imagined,’ said I, ‘that as my hostess was a countrywoman of mine, her house would at least be reputable and safe, whatever else it might not be. When I discovered my mistake, it was too late to rectify it, and I have since been detained here by compulsion. But from having lived entirely apart from the principals of the house, I know so little of them, that I could hardly dare to pronounce sentence on them from anything I have seen. I have, however, apprehensions respecting them too alarming to be expressed. Yet, alas! I cannot get away.’

‘Madam,’ said Mr. O’Callaghan, ‘I had the

honour to know Sir William Mulgrave, from his having banked with me when he was in Paris, a few years since, and the very great respect with which he inspired me makes me desirous of being useful to his daughter. If there is anything in which I can serve you, madam, I beg you to command me. Shall I be deemed impertinent, if, after your obliging frankness with me, I inquire whether you are in debt to Mrs. Murphy ?'

I explained to him my exact position in that respect, not omitting to state what had just passed on the part of M. Le Soutien, and the terror in which he had put me by his menaces of a debtors' jail.

'Good God !' he ejaculated, 'the man must be mad ! But you must leave this 'den of thieves,' madam, and that without delay. It is no place for you to remain in another hour—the Murphys are notorious for a swindling transaction, which took place here not long since, and which was reported in all the journals of the day. As by the forgery of your name to a document passing through my house you have been most seriously inconvenienced, you must allow me at once to advance the amount of your draft.'

I had begun to reply, but he stopped me by saying—'Do not concern yourself, madam, on my account, I will take care to refund myself, and, as I have no doubt, by discovering the author of the forgery. Excuse me for a moment; I must speak to

M. Le Soutien, who occasionally does business for me.' •

He went into the antechamber to him, and on returning, inquired if I knew of any house to which I might remove, on leaving Mrs. Murphy's. I informed him of Madame de Corbière's *pension*. He inquired if I knew anything of her, and when I said nothing, but as the mistress of a boarding-school, he replied—'I recollect her now, and I believe you may trust yourself there.'

'And now, madam,' he continued, 'I hope you will not consider me presuming, if I advise you to let me settle with the Murphys the amount of your bill. Le Soutien tells me, that in the memorandum they have furnished him of your debt to them, they have overcharged you, as he has learnt from yourself. But if you will inform me precisely how much you owe them, I will take care they shall not be paid more than their due.'

I explained the account to him, and after thanking him with heart-felt gratitude for his services, which he would not acknowledge as such, I returned with him to the *salon* in which we had left the Murphys. Pausing on our way to it, he said,—'As my time must necessarily be short here, I beg to say a word respecting your departure, which I hope may be immediate, as I could hardly consider you personally safe, after what may perhaps occur in the coming interview. If it would be agreeable to

you to remove within an hour, I will leave my clerk here to assist your departure. Meantime, lest Madame de Corbière should not be prepared to receive you so promptly, I will call and inform her of your coming.'

Oh, how grateful to me was this kind consideration! how unexpected, too! My whole being seemed changed. I attempted once more to thank Mr. O'Callaghan, but he would not allow me.

When we re-entered the *salon*, the Murphys were precisely in the same position as when we left them. As Mr. O'Callaghan entered with me, and handed me to a chair, they looked aghast at each other. He resumed his former seat at the table, and the clerk placed himself at his elbow as before, to whom he said, 'M. Venier, request M. Le Soutien, who is in the next room, to walk in here.'

As Le Soutien entered, he cast a sort of sheepish, mortified look at me, and a glance of affright at the Murphys. Mr. O'Callaghan motioned him to a seat; then, turning to Mrs. Murphy, he said sternly, 'You, madam, I presume, answer to the name of Murphy?'

She bent her head, with supreme hauteur.

'You have, perhaps, yet to learn,' he continued, 'that a forgery has been committed in a draft that has passed through my house, by which this lady, Mrs. Fitzgerald, has been defrauded of upwards of twelve hundred francs. Is this information now com-

municated to you for the first time, or have you heard of the affair before?’

The querist looked from the mother to the daughter, while Mrs Murphy became deadly pale, and her daughter busy with a smelling bottle. An appalling silence of a few minutes ensued; but recovering themselves, they both exclaimed, that it was insulting to put such questions to them; what had they to do with the forgery? were they to be treated thus in their own house? and, with a violent movement on Mrs. Murphy’s part, she rose from her seat, her daughter following her example, and both attempted to leave the room.

This was not permitted. A whisper from the clerk had fixed the attention of the banker on Miss Murphy, and in a tone more authoritative than courteous, he desired them both to resume their seats. The little lawyer had sprung up to open the door for them; but he also was commanded to return to his seat.

The clerk then, addressing Miss Murphy, inquired if she did not remember to have seen him, some weeks before, in his office at Mr. O’Callaghan’s bank. She first hesitated, then denied, and at last told him that he was ‘an impertinent fellow.’

The clerk then, without further circumlocution, told her he was ready to make oath to her having received, from his hands, the amount of the draft in question; for which he had taken a receipt from her,

which she had signed, in his presence, 'Helen Fitzgerald.'

As the clerk ceased speaking, Mr. O'Callaghan exclaimed, 'Your evidence, M. Venier, is decisive; but it must be given in a different court. Our path is now clear. Miss Murphy must appear before the proper authorities. You, M. Le Soutien, as a man of law, in my service, must direct the proceedings, and adjourn with us to a legal tribunal. We have police officials already on the premises; I found them on duty here, on my arrival, awaiting Mrs. Murphy's orders; they are now under mine.'

Mr. O'Callaghan had scarcely uttered these words, when both mother and daughter, looking wildly round, fell at the same instant on their knees before him, uttering a vociferous and passionate entreaty for mercy, so much at variance with their looks of defiance, as to give a tragi-comic air to the part they were performing, and render their imprecatory denials and their proffers of restitution at once contradictory and ludicrous. As Mr. O'Callaghan continued, in spite of all this, to look severe and firm, tears, faintings, and hysterics were tried, but in vain, either to excite his sympathy or obtain his civility.

Coolly allowing them to exhaust themselves after their own fashion, he awaited a pause, which at length enabled him to say, 'Mrs. Murphy, you kneel to me, as if I had the power to pardon your daugh-

ter's offence, or remit the punishment of it. I have no such power. I would have the affair carried into a court of justice, and let the law take its course; but if you would avert that proceeding and its consequences, you must kneel to Mrs. Fitzgerald—not to me. She is the injured party, and the only one whose province it is to decide on the next step to be taken. If you can prevail on her, by confession and restitution, to obliterate the wrong you have done her, I certainly will not impede the exercise of her clemency; but you must decide quickly, as I have no more time to waste on your indecision.'

After waiting their reply some minutes longer, Mr. O'Callaghan's forbearance was exhausted, and he desired M. Le Soutien to call in the police. Frightened at his vehemence, the Murphys turned themselves half-round on their knees towards me, and with their faces covered with their hands, howled out a jargon of words, utterly unintelligible.

Mr. O'Callaghan, perceiving that this mode of procedure was but an evasion of his requirement, exclaimed impetuously, that he would have no mincing of the matter, and that if they were not prepared to offer at once a suitable and satisfactory submission and acknowledgment of the wrong they had done, he would terminate the scene.

Then, turning to Miss Murphy, he said, 'Allow me to be your prompter, in this one act of your drama. You must say to that lady, that although

you have committed the forgery, you are sorry for it; but that if she will allow the affair to be settled, without carrying it into a court of justice, you will make any reparation that she may dictate. If you are unable to speak, said he, bow your heads, ladies, (in acquiescence in my demand) to Mrs. Fitzgerald.'

They both bent their heads lowly, though not to me. But Mr. O'Callaghan, seemingly still dissatisfied with their concession, turned to me, and assuming the air and verbal form of an officer in a court of justice, said, 'How say you, madam? Prosecution, or no prosecution? Shall I hand these respectable ladies to the police officers or not, madam?'

There was something irresistibly ludicrous in the whole scene, but especially in Mr. O'Callaghan's manner and look, as he thus appealed to me; but I briefly replied, that I left the affair entirely in his hands, without the remotest wish to require more than he might think due to me.

'You do me much honour, madam,' said he, and turning to the Murphys, who still remained on their knees, he said, 'It is now for you and your daughter, Mrs. Murphy, to accept or reject the umpire proposed by that injured lady. What say you? will you abide by my sentence or not? Yes, or No?'

They both replied, faintly, 'Yes.'

'You and your daughter may rise, then, Mrs. Murphy, and take your seats. I have no more to

say to you at this moment, as it will be necessary for me to consider, before I can decide on what terms I shall advise Mrs. Fitzgerald to obliterate the wrong which has been done her, and to suffer your daughter to escape its consequences. Meantime, I shall leave the police, whom I found at your door, in charge of your premises and of yourselves, until my return.'

Mr. O'Callaghan then wrote me a cheque on his bank for the full amount of my draft, and handing it to me, said, 'I shall have the honour of calling on you, madam, as soon as I have despatched the affair here.'

He then took his leave, leaning on Le Soutien's arm, whom he took with him, saying aloud to his clerk, that he was to await Mrs. Fitzgerald's commands in the antechamber.

Their departure was the signal for a change of characters. No sooner was the door closed, than Mrs. Murphy, with a ghastly look of rage and bitterness—notwithstanding her recent abjectness—rose, and, striding across the room before I had time to get out of it, attempted to fasten the door. Not succeeding in her attempt, she placed herself full before it, exclaiming, in one of her fiercest tones—'Murderess, by inheritance, of all my fame and fortune! Destroyer of my daughter! Why am I thus become your victim—at the moment, too, when fate had made you mine? What are *your* powers, or those of all your race combined, that *I* should thus

be foiled by *you*? You—a moping, spiritless, and fair-faced heretic and beggar; void of all energy and enterprise, which might have made you worthy of the hate I bear to every drop of your proud father's blood! We fed at the same breast—we grew together; he at first was kind, and afterwards disdained me. For this, 'twas joy to see his house destroyed—his offspring blighted like untimely fruit—and every one of his once worshipped name withered, or withering, beneath my vengeance! For I had power to undermine your haughty father—ay, and your witless husband, too! I have a sphere unknown to you. And bliss it was to see my projects prosper—to see Fitzgerald loathe the joys of home, and a soft wife, so dutiful, she knew not how to resent her own deep wrongs! And Fate, to crown me with a final triumph, sent *you* to Paris—threw you and yours within my walls. If I have griped you hard,—say, Margaret Murphy has a constant heart, that never yet forgot an injury, or shrank to do the bidding of her church. Call up your hated father from his grave—bid him, too, answer for what you have suffered. His haughty nature spurned me and my faculties—ay, I was scorned—and in such sort, that my last breath shall still be hot with the remembrance! My deep revenge was well-nigh sated; you and yours were in my toils, whence you had never made escape, but for those paltry francs, which for their own sake I disdained, and only saw in their embezzlement *your*.

ruin! What angel, or what demon, taught you to traverse thus my schemes? thus to arrange inquisitorial plans, and brand my daughter with the hangman's mark on my own hearth? But you shall pay for this. Go where you seek to go—take your own course; I will pursue you still, and still with fiercer hate, because in your own person you have become my evil genius; and in this foreign land, where I was living in a sort of peace, with an habitual and composed revenge, awaiting but my moment, you have disturbed my plans, and turned a victory all but won, to a defeat that wakes the demon in me! Look to yourself—for wheresoever you direct your steps, my curse is on you, and my spirit near, to wake the elements of destruction round you, and set them into play. Why do you gape, and look in wonder on my words? they are but faint precursors of the deeds that soon shall follow. Those looks of yours would seem to say, you pity me. I am not mad. Take back your boon, detested as yourself! If I was formed with powers of highest soaring, and disdained the low condition of my race, why was it so? What had I done, that they whom nature made inferior, should take a stand above me? 'Tis but the natural course of power pressed down and caged in iron poverty, to break the bounds that circumscribe its energies, and level it with dust. But why talk thus to you? You, who know not lofty thoughts—you, who in sweet humility and resigna-

tion, yield to every hand that strikes, with hateful meekness ; kissing oppression, to bribe the angels of your pious dreams ! Begone ! I say ; nor ever blast me with your sight again. 'Twill be enough for me to hear of your extinction : to see it, were a pleasure that would kill me with its joy !'

In giving utterance to this last sentence, with an increased exaltation of tone, the speaker had thrown into it such an excess of rage as to exhaust herself of breath ; and as she stood with her right arm extended, and her form drawn up, panting for respiration, in an attitude of impassioned execration, she looked like some fabulous impersonation of Evil, in a moment of frenzy. Although I had been penetrated with terror by the import and violence of her harangue, wondering how it would end, I was fully alive to the sort of demoniac grandeur which marked her commanding features and figure, as she stood before me, suggesting thoughts of an unearthly and irresistible power.

But in the next moment, the Pythoness was reduced to the level of ordinary mortals, by throwing herself into the arms of her daughter, in a screaming paroxysm of hysterics. As this movement left the door unguarded, it afforded me an opportunity of escaping out of the room ; and I was in a moment after in my chamber, with my deserted children.

As I clasped them in my arms, and recalled all that had occurred within the last hour, I scarcely

believed in my own identity. To have been rescued from the destruction prepared for me, after having approached the very brink of an evil so fearful as that of imprisonment, and an inevitable separation from my children, seemed incredible, or miraculous. And yet it had been effected, and by an agency which I had not foreseen.

This deliverance was the sweeter to me, that it had originated, though remotely, from the influence of my dear father's character. I was not the less indebted, however, to the justice and the courtesy of Mr. O'Callaghan, to whom I must feel for ever bound, by sentiments of the deepest gratitude.

My children were delighted at the idea of leaving so horrid an abode, and eagerly lent me such assistance as was in their power. With the additional aid of the servant, my packing was soon effected ; while the presence of Mr. O'Callaghan's clerk, in the ante-chamber, no doubt preserved me from outrages which might otherwise have been offered me. I deputed him to carry my farewell to the Murphys, and to inquire if there was anything which they desired of me, before my departure. But they would not vouchsafe him a reply ; and without further delay, my children and myself, passing by the police officers on the landing, descended those long flights of stairs, which I never saw again.

As the gate of the hôtel closed after us, I felt like a bird escaping from the snare of the fowler. I

was once more in possession of myself; even the phantoms conjured up by the menaces I had so lately heard were, for the moment, all left within the gate.

I had sent my baggage forward in a fiacre to Madame de Corbière's residence, in the Rue d'Angoulême, under convoy of Mr. O'Callaghan's clerk, myself and children, with some small parcels in our hands, following after as quickly as we could. To shorten the distance, we had turned into the Allée des Veuves, intending to proceed by the Rue Ponthieu. As we made a short turn out of the Allée, we came in sight of a figure which painfully arrested my attention, and which could not be mistaken. It was that of Father Rénel, the Jesuit executor. As he was walking before us, he knew not that we were in his rear; but turning his head, he recognised us, and shot at once into a narrow path leading towards the Rue St. Honoré, where we lost sight of him. Although I could have wished, at this moment, to importune the Jesuit respecting my son, the sight of him, and the certainty of his identity, palsied my limbs and curdled my blood, as the rushing recollection of his deeds, and the ruin he had brought on my house, came over me with a crushing feeling of their ever-increasing reality.

CHAPTER XII.

It shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days.—ECCLES.

WHEN we arrived at Madame de Corbière's residence, I found that Mr. O'Callaghan had not forgotten to apprise her of our coming; and we were welcomed by her with more kindness than I had expected. As we were too late for the dinner of the *réfectoire*, we were invited to dine in the *salle à manger*, at six o'clock, where I was to meet the whole family party, consisting of both French and English ladies, who were living in the establishment as *pensionnaires en chambres*. I employed the interval, until dinner time, in arranging my own apartment, in which I found so many comforts of which I had been destitute at the Murphys, that I felt myself, in comparison, almost luxuriously accommodated.

The fatiguing events of the day brought sweet sleep to my pillow that night; and when I awoke next morning, and beheld the sun peeping, though faintly, into my chamber, I had a feeling of happiness that had been long unknown to me, in which my children evidently participated.

At the Murphys', without ever complaining of the discomforts around them, they seemed always in a state of subdued feeling, which caused them to repress every childish sally, and keep a sort of terrified vigil on the looks and movements of the principals of the house, whenever they were in sight. On this morning, they were full of frolic and fun, pointing out and remarking on the new objects around them.

The events, if I may so call them, of the last twenty-four hours, had so completely changed not only my position, but myself, that I was joyfully bewildered by the transformation.

I felt once more the exhilaration of hope, and, under its influence, imagination leaped over difficulties which yesterday seemed insurmountable. I had been put into possession of funds which I had thought lost; and I had now the means of at least a temporary subsistence.

This was too great an occurrence to be cast into shade, even by the discovery that had been made, in Mrs. Murphy's revelations of herself, of the identical 'demon-woman' who had so long been the evil spirit of my father's house. As fancy recalled her, in all the strength of her unprincipled power, with a vaunted confidence in herself of an ultimate triumph over me, my heart indeed sickened again; for I could not but foresee that whatever might be the final result of a malevolence without bounds, my path must henceforth be incessantly haunted by

imaginary as well as real evils, and all my efforts to sustain myself and family might still be perpetually thwarted by an unseen hand.

Stranger as I was, in a strange land, she might already have organized means for my destruction, of which it was impossible for me to make myself cognizant by any vigil that I could keep; even in removing to a distance from her, might I not have given greater scope to her fierce and unwieldy vengeance? If while living in affluence in the bosom of my family, in my native land, herself unknown to me, and without any visible connexion with me, she had been able to penetrate into the sanctuary of my domestic circle, and to exercise there an influence so destructive as that of which she had boasted,—what might not now be apprehended from her resentment, on account of that personal offence which I had committed in bringing to light her daughter's criminality?

I was so utterly defenceless, that if she should be in league with the Jesuit, and attempt what she threatened, I should be irretrievably lost. How entirely different would have been now my position, had I obtained from Monsieur de Carryfort the services he could so easily have rendered me, without effort and without cost to himself.

In my first interview with Madame de Corbière, I perceived that my name was well known to her, yet I could discern no link between the two families.

Madame de Corbière had made no objections to receive me, yet I now recollected that she was cold and *brusque* in her manner, as though my becoming her boarder was not an arrangement perfectly cordial to her. Mr. O'Callaghan's interest in my welfare must doubtless have influenced her; but what prejudices might she not already have conceived against me? All this was but conjecture, still, perhaps, short of reality, as nothing seemed too extravagant or too atrocious for the Murphys to commit.

Had we more faith in the invisible world, our souls would not be without anchor when the storms of life are passing over us. In the events of the past day, I had been made, in some measure, the avenger of my own and my family's wrongs, without the guilt of contriving or desiring such a triumph. Might I not consider this to be an omen of good to me, and an instance of that unseen influence in human affairs, of which, in contemplating the events of life, we see such frequent proof?

Before entering upon the course of occupation which I had prescribed for myself in my new domicile, I wrote to Monsieur de Carryfort a simple relation of the discoveries I had made respecting the Murphys, and of the identity of Murphy herself with Brian, my father's foster-sister. I entreated him to allow me one more interview, that I might be able to discuss with him, whether or not any steps should be taken against Murphy, and the Irish

priest connected with her, relative to the burglary with which they had been formerly charged by my father.

I carried my note myself to the porter's lodge of my uncle's hôtel, that I might be certain of its safe delivery. On presenting it, I was informed that he had gone, a week since, to the south, for the winter. I obtained his address, but ascertaining that he was not likely to remain stationary in any place, it appeared useless to forward my letter to him.

As it was impossible for me, without my uncle, to attempt any chastisement of Murphy and her accomplice, I dismissed the subject, for the present, from my thoughts, with the full purpose of devoting myself unreservedly to the pressing duty of advancing my children's education. Being in a house of education, I had, of course, many accessories to aid me in attaining this object.

There were several English ladies, with their children, living at Madame de Corbière's, with the same object as myself. But I had not the advantage of intercourse with them, being severed from their society by having been received on lower terms than they, in consideration of my eating in the *réfectoire*, with the pupils of the establishment, instead of in the *salle à manger*, with the principals of the house, as is customary with the *pensionnaires en chambres*.

On the second day of my residence with Madame de Corbière, I received a visit from Mr. O'Callaghan,

who came to give me an account of the terms on which he had settled my affair with the Murphys. They had promptly paid him the amount of the draft, in consideration of which he had withdrawn the police from their house, and left them free. They had also readily deducted the overcharge they had made on me, amounting to considerably more than half the sum they had at first demanded ; and I was really happy to have had this affair settled without a prosecution.

As Mr. O'Callaghan had performed the part of a real friend, and proved himself in every respect worthy of my confidence, as well as my gratitude, I made a short recital to him of Mrs. Murphy's real history ; on hearing which, he expressed strong regrets that he had not known it before ; as it was, he said, an omission of duty to society, to suffer such a wretch to escape the vengeance of the law. Nevertheless, on reflection, he feared, that although by a prosecution the daughter would have been disposed of, and prevented from committing further mischief, yet the mother, being left at large, might have continued to be a perpetual, and more incorrigible annoyance than ever ; so that, perhaps, it was best as it was, and he fervently hoped I might hear no more of them.

I could not conclude our interview without some expression of gratitude for the debt I owed him, as my deliverer from the den in which he found me.

But he declined all acknowledgment, assuring me that he should feel eternally indebted to the chance that had enabled him to be of service to so near a relative of the late Sir William Mulgrave.

We were usually summoned to the dinner in the *réfectoire* by a bell, at one o'clock. After I had been about a week at Madame de Corbière's, I one day entered this cold and comfortless room, with my two children, and was motioned by the female at the head of the table, a person whom I had never seen before, to a seat reserved for me. As I was taking possession of it, I looked round the circle to discover my children, who had been separated from me, when, to my inexpressible surprise and horror, my eyes fell on that very being who, in the whole creation, I least wished to see. It was Mrs. Murphy, seated directly opposite to me !

My sight almost failed me ; but mustering courage, I moved to her slightly, a courtesy which she returned with a look that nearly petrified me. Her commanding form was evidently swelling with feelings that sought no concealment from me. They were, nevertheless, chastened by her habitual self-command and regulated violence, so that she omitted nothing which was due either to the place or the companions of her meal.

But her presence recalled so many mystical terrors, that all the sunshine of my thoughts instantly disappeared. It was with difficulty I could sustain an appearance of decent composure.

During dinner, Madame de Corbière came into the room, and very coldly recognised me ; while, as if to make me sensible of her indifference, she lavished on Mrs. Murphy an ostentatious courtesy. All this was a portentous preface to my new residence.

Before the meal ended, I had the additional pang of learning, that the stranger at the head of the table was a daughter of Mrs. Murphy's, just installed as the English teacher of the establishment. Of her I had never heard before ; and her being brought into the house at this time, so immediately after my own arrival there, was so deliberate an hostility to myself, that I could not but fear everything which had been menaced by the mother. I had but just cleared one pitfal, when I found myself falling into another.

Madame de Corbière appeared to be in strict friendship with my avowed enemy ; and if so, I was more than ever in the power of that enemy, since she had now the assistance of others, to aid her in the accomplishment of her purposes ; and they, the persons with whom I had deposited my safety and my comfort.

In ruminating on my position during the hours of darkness, I shuddered at the perpetual recurrence of those evil chances which pursued me everywhere, and which no foresight seemed able to avert. But day returned to suspend reflection ; for though Time is sometimes taunted as a lingerer, nothing stays his flight. I lived on as I could, endeavouring to shut

my eyes against the future, and absorbing myself in occupation, as the only remedy against despair.

Self-preservation, as well as neighbourly duty, seemed to require that I should speak to Madame de Corbière respecting Mrs. Murphy ; as she could not surely know with whom she had connected herself and her school. But another question then occurred to me, of, Whom may Madame de Corbière herself be ? After entertaining all the *pros* and *cons* of the question, I decided on not interfering for the present with the natural course of things.

Some two or three weeks had passed without any new occurrence, or any direct communication with the Murphys, except such as was unavoidable with *her* who daily sat at table with us.

One day, on entering the *réfectoire* at the customary dinner-hour, I found the table without its usual head, and the little community there in a state of great excitement. Inquiring the cause, I learnt that the mother of the English teacher had been missing from her home two days.

Shortly after dinner I met with Madame de Corbière, who, with unwonted courtesy, stayed to converse with me, and to inform me more particularly of what had befallen Mrs. Murphy ; for whose safety, she said, her daughters entertained the most serious apprehensions. She further told me, that the unhappy woman, the night before her disappearance, had had a bitter quarrel with a man who was an Irish priest, and who,

in consequence of heavy losses from time to time at her *ecarté* tables, had complained openly and menacingly of foul play. Madame de Corbière expressed a becoming sympathy in the distress of the daughters, but professed to be greatly shocked at learning—as she said, for the first time—that Mrs. Murphy's residence was notorious as a *rendezvous* for *ecarté* players.

As I had unfortunately been an inmate of that residence, I felt it necessary, in self defence, to say, that during the time I had been under Mrs. Murphy's roof, I had confined myself so entirely to my own apartment, as to know nothing of what passed in the *salons*, until a short time before I left.

On the following day, the wretched woman was found in the fearful 'Morgue.' The hand of violence had been visibly on her—she was frightfully mutilated; and a considerable sum of money that she had about her person when she left her house had been abstracted.

Her destruction caused the downfall of her daughters, who, now that their way of life was known, were obliged to hide themselves from the few respectable persons who had hitherto countenanced them, in ignorance of what they were.

For me, it was an event of immense moment. I saw myself at once delivered from a fiend, who believed herself to hold the very cord of my destiny. For many weeks, almost months, her appalling, mys-

terious form had been crossing my path, both in my sleeping and waking hours, now assailing me in one shape, and then in another. But all at once the hideous phantom disappears, and is seen no more.

Human existence may truly be called a vapour ; and when it is passed away, what an illusion seems that power, which appeared to have been embodied in it !

That I was not, at this moment of horror, under the roof of the Murphys, compelled unavoidably to see and to hear the details of the bloody tragedy, and perhaps to testify to the most revolting facts, was a cause of inexpressible rejoicing. My heart was filled with gratitude, and I lived in comparative happiness for many weeks, often meditating on that strange influence which the wretched Mrs. Murphy must have had in the house of Madame de Corbière, since her removal had changed the aspect and spirit of the whole family, towards my children, as well as myself.

CHAPTER XIII.

I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.—ECCLESIASTES.

MY eldest daughter, Dora, was between eight and nine years of age, and Caroline between seven and eight. Their characters had begun to assume a definite cast; and it was with joy unutterable that I observed also a development of mind beginning to manifest itself, full of promise for the future, by which I might hope to be restored to a companionship as precious as that from which I had been wrenched in my early years.

In this delightful anticipation, the sordid cares of my life were sometimes forgotten, and every thought was suppressed, except such as my children's happiness and amiability inspired.

They began to bear a resemblance to my dear father. There was about them something of the same benignant look and air, and, alas! also the same fatal disposition to give away whatever they possessed indiscriminately. Had I not been so

straitened in my pecuniary circumstances as to make the most minute and odious parsimony duty, how beautiful, under suitable regulation, might this trait of character have become, at an age when selfishness and covetousness are often paramount.

The worn and mean attire of my children seemed unperceived by them, although they sometimes counted the number of visible darns on some article of their dress, as a pretext for bestowing on mamma an equal number of kisses. They knew not that she waked at night, to meditate on how that mended attire was to be replaced, when it had become too shattered for further repair. The grovelling nature of incessant pecuniary cares debases the mind, and contracts its powers; and that hydra-headed evil, embodied in the little word *want*, so unmeaning on the ear of plenty, acts like a torpedo on the morbid sense of him who has long breathed its pestilent atmosphere, and struggled with it on his own hearth. But I had not yet experienced all that poverty is capable of inflicting. I had never been a houseless wanderer—had never literally wanted bread to satisfy my hunger. My privations had principally consisted in the lack of those things which the habits of affluent life had rendered necessities. Now, however, I approach a period in my history on which I cannot look back without shuddering, although it has long passed away.

When I first entered upon a residence at Madame

de Corbière's, the funds arising from my recently cashed draft had enabled me to discharge Mrs. Murphy's debt, and also to pay Madame de Corbière a quarter's board in advance for myself and children. These disbursements, together with some other unavoidable expenditures, had now nearly exhausted my purse.

But as my next remittance would become due within a month, my anxiety for the future arose principally from a conviction, that in Paris, as well as in Ireland, my income was, and would continue to be, too insufficient to supply my children and myself with the bare necessities of life, whatever frugality might be exercised or privations imposed. I had, indeed, already carried experiments on these points to the extremest severity, so that there was no further aid to be expected from them.

Nevertheless, when I balanced my half year's account, I found a deficit, which, though trifling in itself, afforded sufficient evidence that, with the increasing wants of my children, as they grew older, it must in no long time bring me into debt, and consequently to ruin. I had already offered my services to Madame de Corbière, as a teacher in her establishment, but she had demonstrated to me by calculation, that I should save more by continuing, as I had hitherto done, to instruct my children myself, in my own apartment, and avoid the expenses of the school-room, than I should gain by filling any de-

partment in her house as a teacher, the salary she gave being very small.

I then consulted her respecting another plan that I had formed; which was to give lessons out of the house, in private families: but this she did not approve; and as without her recommendation I should be unable to carry such a scheme into practice, I was compelled to relinquish it.

Had Mr. O'Callaghan been a married man, I would have solicited of him an introduction to his family; but as he was not, I could not apply to him for any advice or assistance, considerate and generous as he had been in arranging my affair with the Murphys. Although I was thus compelled, for the moment, to relinquish every project I had formed, I still hoped that some new occurrence might, ere long, enable me to increase my resources by my own exertions.

At the termination of my first quarter, I was reminded, by note from Madame de Corbière, that the ensuing quarter became immediately due in advance; but as it was not possible for me to make the advance until I received the remittance, now due from Ireland, and which I every day expected, I explained to Madame de Corbière my exact pecuniary position. She accepted the explanation, with great courtesy, as a sufficient apology for my not complying immediately with the rule of her house. A few days afterwards, I received a letter from my agent in Ire-

land, containing, as I joyfully supposed, my expected remittance.

But on opening it, and perusing with eagerness its contents, I soon learnt that the property on which the fragment of my jointure had been secured, was destroyed by an incendiary fire; and that, as an omission had been made by my agent in the payment of the insurance on it when last due, all I had in the world was swept away. I read this letter over again and again, before I was able to comprehend the extent of my calamity. When I did understand it, although an habitual feeling of ruin, and a constant expectation of a final stroke had become a chronic affection of my mind, ever since the Jesuit had announced his power over me, I fell under the shock as one who is taken by surprise.

But the first moments of a real calamity are less terrible than its effects. These come slowly and silently on us, from day to day, reducing us gradually to extinction. The mariner whose bark the storm is rending from under him, seeing that all expedients are exhausted, silently lashes himself to a top-mast, and awaits his fate. I had not yet arrived at this entire negation of effort, for I had children to save; and so long as the 'wasting barrel' and the nearly-drained 'cruise of oil' retained but a single meal, I dared not yield to the despair that would have rendered me impotent.

While I ruminated on the course I should take,

my children came running into the room, and all lonely and lost as they appeared to me at that moment, I pressed them to my heart, and abandoned myself to the transports of an unutterable terror and tenderness. I could not speak to *them* of what had happened ; but it was essential that, without loss of time, I should inform Madame de Corbière of it ; for of course I could no longer shelter myself under her roof. In an interview with her, shortly after, I related to her all that had occurred, without reserve ; and having done so, found no difficulty in prevailing on her to allow me and my children to remove from her house without delay. Knowing, as she did, that I had two uncles in affluent circumstances, she no doubt expected that I should be assisted by them, and expressed a hope that I should shortly be able to return to her.

I made no allusion to them, however, although a new hope had sprung up in my heart, that the extremity of my circumstances might now, perchance, move their compassion. To my uncle at Vienna I had never yet made any application for pecuniary assistance, lest I might thereby unsettle the security of my mother's dependence on him. But I now wrote to him without delay ; and stating the destitute circumstances of my family, besought him to bestow on me only enough to support us for a few weeks, so as to give me time to organize some means whereby I might earn, at least, enough to prevent our perish-

ing of hunger. I knew well that I had an advocate near him, who, if he should apprize her of the object of my letter, would plead zealously for me. With her I was unable to communicate, on account of the postage. I had, indeed, never been able to keep up any correspondence with her or my sister since my arrival in France, on that account; and on the same account, my faithful Mary was also lost to me.

While my letter was on its way to Vienna, I made arrangements with a woman of the name of Fanchette, who for the last three months had been my laundress, to receive me and my daughters into her house as lodgers.

Fanchette occupied a small and mean *entresol* near the Madelaine, which was then in progress of erection. She had but one room to spare, and for that she asked me only the small sum of two francs per week. I was, of course, to provide myself with what I might want of furniture; but having no bed, and scarcely anything except personals, I requested Fanchette to purchase some clean, dry straw, in sufficient abundance to enable me to make beds for us all. I was in possession of a few francs, and was therefore able to pay for this at once, and to cover it with sheeting, which I had by me.

When I came to take possession of my room, I found, besides my straw-bed, which looked invitingly clean, a table, and two chairs, and a pot of artificial flowers on my mantel-piece—*garniture de cheminée*

being essential to a Frenchwoman's ideal of comfort.

Fanchette could neither read nor write; but it is not necessary to do these to be intelligent and amiable, for she was both to a remarkable degree, and showed, besides, so much tact and delicacy in arranging and contriving for our convenience, that I almost fancied I had found another Mary. How merciful is Providence! how visible its interposition, even in our meanest affairs! I had always associated the idea of extreme poverty with vice, ignorance, or, at least, vulgarity; but in my illiterate hostess I found a mind full of intelligence, a heart overflowing with goodness, and a deferential delicacy of manner in her intercourse with us, who she knew had fallen in life, that might shame the hard deportment of many a Lady Bountiful in the hovels of the wretched.

After paying Fanchette for my straw, I had only from ten to twelve francs left, for my lodging and food, for such time as I might be able to keep myself and my children alive. In full consciousness of this fact, I frequently lost the power of thought, and sat for hours together in speechless imbecility. Without just such a kind and beneficent creature as Fanchette, I believe I should have yielded at once to my despair, and expired. Shocked as she was at our actual condition, of which she soon became cognizant, she retained her cheerful air and tone; and, spite of her own poverty, and the fear she entertained of

appearing to know too much, she repeatedly brought into our room some eatables for the children, which she affected to be a superfluity that she knew not what to do with.

I had been under the necessity of confining our diet to bread and water from the first day of our residence with Fanchette, who burst into tears when she first made a discovery of this fact, and ran hastily out of the room, in an undisguised paroxysm of feeling.

The desolation of my heart, at this time, made sad ravages on me, and a few days reduced me almost to a spectre ; but the hope I had founded on my letter to Vienna kept me from sinking. Meanwhile, I lost all power of conversing ; there seemed to be a great gulf betwixt me and every one I knew or met, which I had neither the power nor the desire to pass. The magnitude of my affliction thus plunged me into a frightful solitude, in which I felt crushed by the weight of my own impotency. The expected letter from Vienna at length arrived, with the postage paid ; a circumstance that at the first moment flushed me with joy, as I knew that my children's bread must otherwise have been curtailed to defray it. I thought, besides, that it was a good augury. The contents of the letter were, nevertheless, such as the poor may generally expect, in circumstances like mine, from their rich relatives. My uncle actually pleaded poverty ; and explained himself by saying

that his whole income being absorbed by his habitual expenses, it was not in his power to make me a remittance, but advised me to apply to my uncle De Carryfort, who, being on the spot, was better able to judge of my wants, and to supply them. He was even zealous enough (in his desire to serve us by his pen) to write a note to the count, which he requested I would deliver in person. I saw my dear mother's hand in the advised mode of procedure, but I doubted the efficacy of the experiment.

Yet I went once more to the residence of Monsieur de Carryfort, and finding him at home, sent in the baron's note, inclosed in one of my own, in which I told him that my children and I were dying of want. But I was not permitted to see him; a verbal answer by the servant informed me that 'Monsieur le comte begged I would not trouble myself to call again, as he was going immediately out of town.'

The sacred fable, that represents the dog of the rich man as having more compassion than his master for the beggar that lay in want and disease at the gate of his mansion, is as applicable as ever to the class whom it was intended to warn. Could my uncle, but for one hour, have suffered the wretchedness which I was then suffering, and the almost greater misery of asking relief from him, how deeply would he have felt that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive!'

My present visitation had come upon me so suddenly, and with so exterminating a power, that, without assistance from friends, nothing short of a miracle could save us from being swept away by it from the face of the earth. There had been neither time nor scope for effort: what I could do, I had done, but it had been utterly unavailing; and now, with my children dying by inches before my eyes, I cried out, in agony of spirit, 'Where are the ravens that fed Elijah? and where, above all, is the God of Elijah?' But in this tempest of feeling, the 'small still voice' was not heard to answer; and nothing remained, but that we must die. After all, said I—as my heart, emptied of hope, became too sick for further resistance—to die of want is no unusual occurrence. Why does this doom affect me so deeply? What am I, or what is my father's house, that the visitations of the Almighty should pass *us* by, more than others? How many thousands of God's creatures die daily of want, or of disease arising from it, in spite of the bountiful provisions of both nature and society to avert it? Yet little know we of the evil we have never felt. How often have I glanced at the stinted obituary of the wretch who had died of famine, on the pavement of the street, or on the floor of the hovel, and, washing away the impression of it in a few tears, have turned from the record, and forgotten it!

But now 'mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear

hath heard and understood it ;' therefore ' my face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death !'

Paris, filled with the products of wealth, exhibits everywhere, with prodigal hand, a profusion of inviting viands ; covering her stalls and filling her shop windows with the most varied aliments, garnished to invite the appetite of the epicure, while they tempt to evil the poor and hungry wretch who gazes on them. Such is the constitution of society, that in a city thus glutted with food, the famishing wretch who cannot *buy* becomes another *Tantalus*, doomed to endless hunger and thirst, while surrounded by the elements of life.

I had been about five months in Paris, when I returned from Monsieur de Carryfort's hôtel, under the full conviction that our death-warrant was now signed, and that there remained scarcely anything more for me to do on earth. But the smallest transaction becomes great to the imagination when it is consciously performed for the last time. The mere payment of my week's rent to Fanchette, the only debt I owed in the world, was accompanied with tears. It was with difficulty I prevailed on her to take it ; for although she was not aware that I was paying her my last franc, she persisted in it that she did not want it. The balance that remained to me was only sufficient to buy bread for the morrow ; so that I very naturally considered our hours to be numbered.

Fanchette had informed me that she was unavoidably going into the country until Monday; and when, at about five in the afternoon of Saturday, she closed the door, to leave us alone for two days, I had no expectation of living to see her return, for I already felt as if I were dying. But at the age of twenty-seven, when the constitution is naturally good, the physical nature makes great resistance to death. Had it been otherwise, I should not have survived this crisis.

My children and I made our accustomed preparations for the Sabbath morning of the morrow, and then eating our morsel, lay down for the night. The children were soon asleep, but the loneliness of Fanchette's *entresol*, now that it was bereft of her light, quick step, and her occasional low chant, as she moved about at late hours in her own room, in performance of her occupation, became so oppressive to my fancy as to keep me awake; or, if I closed my eyes for a few minutes in forgetfulness, I fell into dreams from which the terror they inspired soon roused me. At one time, I saw skeleton infants gnawing their own limbs; at another, my children were being tumbled into a grave, without shroud or coffin.

After repeated suffering of this kind, I rose, about three in the morning, and looking out of the small window of my room, observed, for the first time since I had been there, a large private hotel within view of it.

As the bright moonbeams fell on the court of the

mansion, I saw there a moving female figure—apparently that of an upper servant—whose gestures exhibited feelings of an agonising character.

In Paris, the dwellings of the poor are often in close contiguity with those of the rich. This was the case with Fanchette's *entresol*. Even under the same roof with me and mine, who were perishing of want, on different floors there resided persons of independence and of wealth, who enjoyed every day the pre-eminent luxuries of Paris. But I am wandering; I meant only to speak of the suffering individual whom I saw traversing the *cour* within sight of my window.

A rumour reached me in the morning, that a suicide had been committed in that *cour* during the night; and I felt, on hearing it, that I must have seen the wretched perpetrator of that hideous crime, perhaps at the very moment when she was hovering on eternity. It was not until many months afterwards, that I knew myself to be at all connected with this occurrence. I then learnt that the wretched suicide, whose agonies I had witnessed previous to the deed, was Miss Murphy. The magistrates of the locality in Ireland where the destruction of my property had taken place, when it was known that an act of incendiarism had occurred in their own immediate neighbourhood, left no stone unturned to discover the perpetrators of it. Their researches were successful, and although the act proved to be but the

work of one hand, it was discovered to have been projected by Mrs. Murphy and her daughter, and performed under their direction.

Mrs. Murphy's death, indeed, had taken place previous to its actual accomplishment ; but letters were found in her hand, darkly interlined by another, and a male hand, enforcing it on the tool selected for their purpose, and offering him Miss Murphy's hand, and a home in her mother's establishment in Paris, as soon as the destruction should be accomplished, thus aiming at a fulfilment of the vindictive and mysterious threats uttered by Mrs. Murphy, on the day I left her house.

Another letter was also found, of a subsequent date, in Miss Murphy's hand, urging the criminal to promptitude, and confirming the conditions on which he had been engaged to perform the deed.

These particulars had been disclosed in the judicial examinations made in a court of justice. The wretched Miss Murphy, just at the time they were taking place, had entered on the service of the family occupying the hôtel within sight of my window. Her connexion with this affair became known to her employers through an application made to them by the officers of justice employed in it in Ireland ; and she, being apprized of the charges against her, committed the suicide I have related.

CHAPTER XIV.

My days are past, my purposes are broken off.—JOB.

THERE are calamities in life of which no adequate account can be given by the sufferer, not only because language is incapable of depicting them, but because the pain which they inflict renders the mind too feeble to take note either of itself or of them.

The acute agony that accompanies the waking from sleep of a wretched being, whose intense suffering has been awhile suspended by it, surpasses all words of torture, and can be understood only by those who have felt it.

When I awoke on Sunday morning, it was from a sound and deathlike sleep—the sleep of exhaustion, in which every reality around me, and every thought within me, had ceased to exist. The pangs inflicted by returning consciousness, with all its fearful perceptions, were greater than I could bear; and I started up, to meet and grapple with the new horrors that rushed on my view. Not that our situation was materially different from what it had been for some days past, except that we were more exhausted, and

that this day, unless we could survive the entire want of food, must be the beginning of the end. Fanchette would, indeed, return in the morning, and I should again hear her pleasant voice; and she would, perhaps, again force on my children her gift of what, to make it accepted, she was wont to call her superfluous food. But could I allow my children to be fed by her who could scarcely support herself? By to-morrow, however, the force of gnawing hunger might perchance bear away all sense of what was due to another, and leave me but with a single thought—that of saving my children's lives.

Oh, ye who sit in judgment on the thefts of the starving wretch, whose bewildered sense no longer discerns the sacred barrier that stands betwixt him and another's bread, have mercy on him when he 'steals but to satisfy his hunger!' Yet, better for me and mine to die, than to put forth the hand to evil. Oh, Life! Death! what are ye? Even the possession of life does not teach us what it is. What then can we know of death? None that have passed through its dark valley return to tell us what it is. Nevertheless, with my senses wide awake, and with quickened perceptions of the incorporeal world around me, I saw Death marching on us with rapid strides; and if, in watching his advance, I could have believed that all which had been given me to do, was done, how joyfully should I have hailed his approach! But he came not alone to *me*; my children, too,

must die; and though the youngest, being awhile provided for, would perchance survive us, yet he would be left alone in the world, undefended, unprepared for the accidents of life, and, as a natural consequence of such an isolation, would perhaps die an early death by the hand of violence and cruelty, or from a course of sin. How could I persuade myself that the natural deterioration arising from the want of parental care could be averted from him? My own life was as nothing in the balance with that of my children, whose never-dying spirits had been entrusted to me by the only Bestower of life. The deep truths of our complicated being slumber in the soul during our quiet hours; but awake like giants, to crush us with their strength, in moments of weakness and terror, when nothing is left to us but our despair. Overwhelmed with appalling doubts and cares, and with that sorrow of earth which worketh death, I scarcely dared inquire whether my spirit, so soon, perhaps, to appear before God, were meet for his presence. I attempted to peruse the sacred pages, but they were a sealed book to me. Every moment I was compelled to retrace what I had read, and force myself back upon passages once luminous to me, but which now conveyed nothing to my distracted mind. I knelt, and endeavoured to pray; but thought vacillated, my brain reeled, and I could no longer realize the divine idea of a Father in heaven. It seemed as though the portals of that

world were closed against me, and that the Omnipotent had 'covered himself with a cloud, that my prayer should not pass through.'

My children, shrunken and withered, lay half-dead before me; and the state of listless immobility in which they were, rendered it impossible to rouse, or to interest them in anything. They were every moment overpowered by sleep, or awaking out of it with a frightened start. After some time, a similar stupor crept over myself; and life stood still, both with them and me, until the afternoon, when we gathered round the fragment of bread that remained; and, as 'the widow of Zarephath and her son' had done before us, we prepared to eat it together, and die. I divided it amongst us with a solemnity of feeling that overwhelmed me, and clasping my children in my arms, shed over them a torrent of tears.

We had now arrived at a point in time which touched eternity! Yet we might still live many hours, perhaps days. I had so long been counting the pulsations of my children, watching their deathlike appearance, and listening to their shortening respiration, that, absorbed in those fearful symptoms, no thought of possible relief occurred to me. But suddenly I became impressed with a sense of criminality, in thus sitting still, without making an effort, or raising a cry for help. An impulse seized me to seek God in his sanctuary; for although my prayers

seemed no longer to reach the skies, yet perhaps, in concert with other worshippers in the temple of God, my voice might once more ascend to heaven ; and I resolved to go, as one of old went to the pool of Bethesda, to wait for 'the coming of the angel there.'

The pallid cheeks of my children, flaccid and faded as the leaves of a rose verging on decay, inspired no hope of their being able to walk to the English church, in the 'Avenue de Neuilly ;' yet, like myself, they desired to do so when it was proposed to them. We left our *entresol* about four, and although the distance was not greater than that of a quarter of an hour's walk to the Champs Elysées, through which lay our direct path, we did not get there until five. We had then still a distance of another hour to accomplish before we could reach the church, as neither of us was able to move more than a step or two at a time.

The avenues on which we were entering were already crowded with every varied class of society. Amongst them many beggars, on whose countenances no want was visible, yet they solicited alms with success. As I observed that success, the question flashed across my brain like an electric shock,—why may not *I* beg? And yet, as I hastily and unconsciously raised my hand to a passer by, my arm fell as if palsied by the attempt. The crowds around us little thought of the misery that mingled that night with their mirth !

There was everything on that fine February evening to charm the senses—even mine—if a single earthly hope had been latent in my soul. The weather was mild and the air soft; the sun was sinking in beauty to the edge of the horizon, while the moon was rising in the opposite heaven; and as the greater light departed, the lesser shone resplendently through the leafless branches of the trees, prolonging day, and courting the willing crowds to linger in their walk. Flower-girls were there with snowdrops and crocusses—the first I had seen in this foreign land—and green-house flowers were also there in rich abundance, and music and song, to lend their aid to the enchantment of the hour and the scene.

Numerous carriages, ranged at the edge of the outer avenue, awaited the orders of those who had left them, to mingle with the joyous multitudes in the Grande Promenade.

In the more retired walks, the customary amusements of a Parisian Sunday were everywhere going on, with an eagerness and an excitement that seemed to mock the misery of a group like ours. But the actors in those scenes saw us not. Pantomime and play—whirling-machines and monkeys—puppets and conjurors—were too absorbing to leave a thought for anything but themselves. These things, which ministered pleasure to such crowds of human beings, impeded our feeble progress so materially, that we scarcely advanced at all.

The children were so much exhausted that they hung on each other and on me for support, before we had gone half the length of the Avenue. As I was unable to sustain or assist them for want of strength to support myself, I found it would be impossible for us to reach the church; and I bitterly regretted *that* thoughtlessness and over-estimation of our strength, which had brought us so far from our *entresol*.

We had withdrawn to one of the most retired avenues to escape the jostling crowd, and my limbs entirely failing me, I sank on the grass, where I remained for several minutes, with my children clinging to me and weeping beside me, without attracting the slightest attention from any one of the occupied multitudes in our vicinity.

All at once, I heard a sound which seemed familiar to me. It was the playful bark of a dog, repeated two or three times. His rich, full tones struck me as resembling those of Rover; and shaking off the lethargy that had fallen on me, I looked around, gazing into the deep shadows of the wood, almost expecting to discover him there, while I breathlessly listened for a repetition of his bark. It was at length repeated, but the sound was evidently retreating into distance. The weakness of a child was on me, and I wept at my disappointment. But looking at my children, who now lay quietly beside me on the grass, I saw in them a new source of alarm.

Their faces were changed, and presented an appearance that startled me. I felt there was not a moment to be lost, and that if we did not return at once to our domicile, we might never reach it more, but might be carried in a state of insensibility to some public place, to die amidst a crowd.

Arousing and caressing my poor children, I explained to them that we must return home immediately. They understood me sufficiently to rise from the ground, with my assistance, and each taking a hand of mine, clung to it, and crept feebly by my side, until we came at length in view of the 'Madeleine,' when a faint exclamation of joy broke from them both, at being so near home.

Home! what a home! but still 'sweet home.' We reached the porter's lodge, and were soon within the gate of entrance. As we crossed the court-yard, a bright moonbeam fell on our path. I gazed on its silvery light, and thought it was the last time I should ever look upon it. The cares of earth seemed leaving my heart, and I felt with joy that the journey of life was nearly ended.

The porter offered me a lighted candle, which I accepted, and after closing and locking the door of our room as we entered it, my children sank down at once upon their bed on the floor, and became in a moment so utterly motionless, that I doubted whether all were not over with them. I did not attempt, however, to pry into the fearful secret of their deathlike

stillness. The time was past for affording them relief. I had nothing with which to revive them, and not physical strength enough to render them corporeal aid of any sort.

A far greater duty pressed itself on me. Their spirits were returning to God who gave them. I tried to kneel, while I commended them to his mercy; but, unable to sustain myself, sank on the floor by their side. A few moments of rest had a wonderful effect on my mind. My soul seemed to wake out of its late stupor, and I realized the promise, 'at even-tide it shall be light.' Yes, all things assumed a new aspect. The spiritual nature expanding itself, and throwing off the dull mortality of an earthly life, mounted as 'on eagles' wings' towards its divine source, while the quickening words of the Saviour, 'he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,' awakened every glorious hope, every vision of faith my soul had ever known, and I blessed with fervent adoration, in these (as I then thought), my last moments, *that* knowledge I had derived from Scripture, of 'God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' A sense of sin forgiven enabled me to approach, confidently, Him 'who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' and to lay my children and myself prostrate before his throne in hope! If for a moment I afterwards thought of the Jesuit priest as the destroyer of myself and family, it was but to feel

that I forgave him. How long I lay after this, I know not. As my eyes closed, I became unconscious. A movement outside the door of my room disturbed me, and the short, half-bark of a dog, roused me to recollection.

It was the same bark I had heard in the Champs Elysées. In a moment, the bell of the apartment pealed startlingly through the silent rooms, and in the next instant, a gentle tap at my door was heard. Though scarcely a step from the bed to the door, I was so long in rising from the floor, that a second tap was given before I could reach it. As I opened it, a large dog rushed in, and nearly threw me down with the fierce joy of his greeting. It was Rover! That I did not fall to the floor, was owing to an arm that was thrown round me to prevent it. I turned to look at my supporter, and recognised, in deep mourning, my own Mary! In the surprise and joy of the moment, I became utterly speechless.

* * * * *

Mary discerned the helplessness of our whole party, although she was far from imagining the cause. The candle was still burning, and I was not so unconscious but that I observed her wondering and distracted look, as she threw around a glance of inquiry; and I uttered, as articulately as I was able, 'Mary, we are dying for want of the necessaries of life; take us where we can obtain them.' She looked aghast; but with her accustomed tact, soon

procured assistance, and placed us in a *fiacre*. The children, unable to sustain themselves, sank on the floor of the carriage, while Mary supported me in her arms. I had become insensible before we reached the Hôtel Montmorency, whither she took us, and where she had occupied an apartment since her arrival in Paris.

When I returned to life, I was in a comfortable bed, with Mary attending on me, and another person sitting by my bedside. Everything around, except herself, was strange to me; and I had lost all recollection of how I came there.

As I endeavoured to raise myself, that I might take a survey of the place, I found I could not move. In a moment Mary sprang to me, and taking my hand, kissed it passionately, exclaiming, 'Oh, my dear mistress, thank God, you are yourself again!'

A doctor, who was waiting in an adjoining room, immediately entered and felt my pulse, but he said nothing. Although I was quite sensible of everything that was passing, I was unable to speak; but in a short time, after several attempts, I articulated — 'my children.' The doctor replied, 'They are asleep in bed, madam, they shall be taken care of; do not allow any thought of them to disturb you.' Some kind of refreshment having been administered, under the doctor's direction, I shortly after became restless and bewildered to a fearful degree. I no longer saw Mary, or any one but the doctor, and I

thought that what I had lately seen and heard must have been a dream. Even the present appeared like a scene in a dream, and I shrank from the piercing eyes of the doctor, who looked fixedly at me, and attempted to escape from him, but could not move or utter a sound. I then closed my eyes, and horrid visions of all kinds appeared before me, mingled in a confused mass, and in endeavouring to run away, I fell into a deep pit. After passing through the several stages of a nervous fever, I was once more by degrees in possession of my faculties.

My first object of recognition was Mary, and as I uttered her name she burst into tears, but immediately checked herself, and assumed an air of tranquillity. I was at this time so weak as to be borne in the arms of my nurses, whenever there was a necessity for moving me. I found Fanchette often associated with Mary in her attendance on me, and thought myself supremely happy with two such attendants. But where was I? at whose cost? were questions I was impatient to ask; yet, could not muster strength to utter. At length the power of speech returned, and my first inquiry was after my children. A door was opened, through which I saw the two girls standing at a table, Dora and Caroline, each with a doll.

As I uttered an exclamation of joy, the door was again softly closed, and the vision departed. I wept myself to sleep for joy and thankfulness, and

when I again awoke, darkness and silence reigned around, except that, in a distant corner of the room, a light shaded by a screen sent forth its soft pale rays, which rather composed than disturbed me. I looked round, and saw Fanchette in an arm chair, wide awake, and looking anxiously towards me. She approached, and offered me delicious fruit, which I ate with eagerness, then again fell asleep; and after this I began to recover. I was soon allowed to listen to a recital of the wonderful coincidences that had occurred so opportunely, to save my children and myself from a death of famine. I was told that a month had elapsed, and my children were so far recovered as to have almost attained their usual healthful appearance. I was allowed to see one at a time, every day, for a few minutes at intervals, until all restraint was taken off.

As soon as I found myself able to talk, I began to question Mary,—‘Why are you in mourning? and how came you to arrive at our *entresol* at a moment so critical to us?’

‘I fear, my dear mistress, that you are not able to know all yet.’

‘Fear not, Mary; tell me what angel brought you to France, and why you came at a point of time when another hour might have been fatal to us all. Tell me every particular; it will do me good.’

‘I must begin then, my dear mistress, with the death of your good aunt, Lady Mulgrave, for whom

I am wearing mourning. She lived only two months after I, through your goodness, went into her service. She was a great sufferer, and became very helpless soon after I went to her ; and she took so great a fancy for my way of doing for her, that she would never willingly have any one else about her person. As her own maid and the other servants were almost worn out with night and day watching, when I first arrived to help them, they were glad to see me, and I lived good friends with them, until they found that their lady preferred my services to theirs. But that is nothing to the purpose. I used to be left alone with my lady, sometimes for hours together ; and it was at such times that she was accustomed to ask me questions about the dear mistress I had left. She seemed so much interested in what I told her, that she sometimes wept till I got frightened, lest I might be doing wrong in telling her what so much moved her feelings. But she continued to question me, until I had told her everything about your dear family, and Father Ossory too. You know ma'am, that Lady Mulgrave was a Protestant, and she clasped her hands together in joy, as she heard of Father Ossory's conversion, and constancy till death. And when I told her how much you suffered, at not being able to put a tombstone over him or your own dear infants, she got Sir Felix to write off by first post, to order a suitable tomb for the good father, and one also for the infants.'

When Mary had got thus far, she was alarmed at my tears, and could not be prevailed on to resume her narrative until the following day, nor even then without the doctor's sanction.

'Lady Mulgrave,' she then continued, 'was not only kind in life, but in death; and even to the last moment continued to speak of you, ma'am, so affectionately that she quite won my heart. She used to say, she wondered how your relations could let you go wandering about the world, as she called it, by yourself, so young as you are too; and she said she felt great regret that she had not known what she did about you long before. You know, I suppose, ma'am, that she did not come into full possession of her large property as an heiress until seven or eight months before her death, when her father died. She was very rich after that, and everything was at her own disposal. Have you heard how Lady Mulgrave made her will, ma'am?'

'No, Mary; I have heard no news of my family since I left Ireland.'

'Well, ma'am, then I have the pleasure of telling you that she has left you five thousand pounds in cash; and in her goodness, she left me also the sum of five hundred; and the whole remainder of her fortune, except a few remembrances to friends, and charities, she has left to Sir Felix. She was so anxious for his conversion from popery, ma'am, that she used to talk to him on the subject every day, and even in her last moments.

‘Her mortal remains, ma’am, were carried by Sir Felix to Mulgrave Castle, and laid in state there, and then buried in the family vault. Of course, ma’am, I came down with the family to Ireland, and had the pleasure of seeing the dear old castle, and feeling myself once more at home in it. Mrs. O’Connell was still there, and we found everything in beautiful order; but it was very dreary without them that were gone, and I did nothing but cry, for the first day or two.’

On this subject I could not restrain my own tears, but was soon able to say, ‘How did the place look, Mary? You know all my favourite spots, and trees, and arbours,—did you take notice of their appearance?’

‘Oh, ma’am, I was for ever running to look at them, for I was always thinking of you when we got to the castle. And though the trees had lost all their leaves before we arrived there in December, I noticed particularly the two that were planted by you, ma’am, and the Marquis de Grammont, on the mound in the park. They are very much grown; but yours—the acacia, ma’am—overtops the oak. They say *that* is because the oak is a tree slow in growing; but the marquis said, when he saw the difference, that he was proud of the ascendancy of the acacia—that was his word, ma’am, to Sir Felix; and that it would ever be the pride of his life to render homage to it.’

‘The marquis, did you say, Mary? What marquis?’

‘Monsieur de Grammont, ma’am.’

‘You bewilder me, Mary. Are you not confounding the past with the present?’

‘No, ma’am. The Marquis de Grammont came on a visit to Sir Felix while I was at the castle, immediately on his return from India. But I beg your pardon, ma’am. I forgot that you had not, perhaps, heard of the marquis’s travels in foreign lands.’

I could not resist the temptation to inquire if the marchioness was with her husband.

‘I don’t know of any such lady, ma’am,’ said Mary. ‘Certainly, the marquis has no wife.’

‘Is the marchioness, then, dead?’

‘He has never been married, ma’am.’

A silence ensued; after which, I said to Mary, ‘Do you not recollect that we heard of the marquis’s marriage, and saw it announced in a Dublin paper, at the bishop’s house, before I was married, or had consented to be so?’

‘It was a false report, ma’am. The marquis’s gentleman told me, that when his master heard of your marriage, ma’am, he was at his hôtel in Paris, and had so long an illness on account of it, that they all thought he would never recover. When he was able to leave his room, he set off for Italy, where he remained for two or three years. After that, he returned to France to look after his estates for a little while, and then set off to the Holy Land.

After that, he went to the East Indies, and visited Sir Lucius and Lady Mac Neil; and his gentleman tells me, ma'am, that lady Mac Neil is handsomer than ever.'

I was so much affected by what I had heard, that in spite of every effort to prevent it, I fainted. When Mary had restored me, by the customary remedies, I lay long in silence, and in a state of feeling that seemed to shatter my whole frame. It touched me to the very soul, that I should have been the cause of so much suffering to Monsieur de Grammont. The falsehood respecting his marriage, that had been played off on me, to persuade me that *he* was false, must have been perpetrated by those who were interested in deceiving me. What an odious wrong had I been compelled to commit against him! How could I ever be reinstated in his good opinion? And how could I endure, though I might never see him more, that I must for ever remain, in his estimation, a perjured, faithless creature, who feared not God, nor regarded man! It is true that I had been sacrificed, at last, by my own vow of obedience to my uncle, extorted by fears for his life; and that vow was not uttered until after I had heard of the marquis's marriage. But who could now obtrude this subject on him, so as to make him acquainted with the exonerating facts of the case?

These ruminations were deeply distressing to me,

and threw me back so much in my progress towards recovery, that my doctor perceived their effects at his next visit, without being able to discover the cause. I was again forbidden all conversation and excitement of every kind. I submitted willingly. I had no wish to learn more about the marquis from Mary, having already food and facts for reflection, that seemed inexhaustible in their power to torment me. But the past, as it can never be recalled, can only become useful by being rendered tributary to the future; and I resolved, as some atonement for the unconscious wrong I had done Monsieur de Grammont, to cherish a never-ending regret. It was some satisfaction to find that he was not entirely alienated from me. Yet I could not understand how he could be otherwise, without knowing all the circumstances attending my marriage, and the barbarous coercion that had been used to accomplish it. I resolved, however, not to allow my imagination to deceive me, by the supposition that Monsiepr de Grammont could now entertain any other sentiment for me than that of compassion for the sufferings I had been compelled to endure. I turned from this subject, to contemplate, with unmixed satisfaction, the income created by my aunt's bequest. This was a substantial good, that inspired me with boundless gratitude, both to God, and the immediate bestower of it. It was more than double the amount of the pittance I had just lost, and would enable me

to live in comfort and competency with my two children.

Almost to the present hour I had been ignorant of how the expenses of my illness, and of the hotel, were to be defrayed, and feared I might be living at Mary's expense. In short, my position was a mystery, which I was afraid to pry into, but the perpetual recurrence of which to my thoughts had kept me anxious and restless, and no doubt materially retarded my recovery. But now, thanks for ever to my bounteous aunt, and to her who had moved her to such kindness, I should be able to pay all my expenses, and to thank God with sincere gratitude for preserving my life. Yet I was still lost in wonder at the extraordinary and rapid change in my affairs, the immediate causes of which it was impossible for me fully to understand, until I had been further enlightened by Mary, who seemed to have been the chief agent in a Divine hand of producing it.

My dear boy, however, still continued a source of abiding and unspeakable disquietude, for no one about me could afford the slightest information respecting him, and I was as yet unable to make any new effort to recover him. It was long before I had nerve enough to utter even his name to Mary, who had received some imperfect account of him from his sisters, and who had too much feeling to broach a subject which she knew must be painful. She

was well informed of what had passed betwixt the Jesuit and myself respecting my access to the child, before I left Ireland, and was therefore able to form her own silent conjectures, and to participate in the disquietude to which she saw that I was occasionally a prey.

CHAPTER XV.

Thy watchful love still guides me as I stray;
 Not chance alone could such an aid afford.

MRS. TIGHE.

IT was now April, and since I had been last abroad, everything in nature must have advanced so much as to make the public gardens and walks look like a new world. I saw proofs of this in the small, well-arranged parterre, overlooked by my chamber window, and in the constant supply of flowers which appeared every morning fresh on my table.

I longed to breath the air of the Tuileries or the Bois de Boulogne, but my doctor was so much afraid of a relapse, that he still required perfect quietude, to restrain, he said, the action of the too rapid pulse. But Mary's information was the remedy for 'a mind diseased,' and I now felt assured that I should not much longer need the doctor. Yet I had lived so long in a state of perpetual agitation and startling vicissitude, that it was difficult for me to believe in pecuniary security, or feel assurance of permanence in any arrangement of life.

But this was a morbid state of feeling, which I

might hope would pass away as I became habituated to comfort, and felt an abiding exemption from the bitterness and gall of that uncertain subsistence which had so long preyed on my vitals.

On the following week Mary resumed her narrative, beginning again where she had left off, with *Monsieur de Grammont*.

‘The marquis,’ said she, ‘when he heard that I, who had been so long in your service, ma’am, was in Mulgrave Castle with Sir Felix’s people, sent for me, to inquire whether you were in health, and what was your place of residence ; and after awhile he was so earnest, ma’am, that he got everything out of me which happened to you before you left Ireland, and sorry I was that I could tell him no more, for I was miserable myself to know how France suited you and the dear children.’

‘You told the marquis everything, Mary?’

‘Yes, ma’am, I told him all about your marriage, and the loss of your property, and Father Ossory’s conversion and death, and a great deal more ; but I hope I didn’t tell him more than I ought, he seemed so very unhappy about you, that when once I began, I couldn’t stop. As soon as he heard that you had gone to Paris, he was for setting out there the next day ; but as I could not give him your address, he sent me off in his own carriage, five miles, to get it from your agent, ma’am. When I got to the agent’s house, he was not at home, and I was obliged to

come away without the address. The marquis then said he must see the cottage where you had lived, and I must show him the window into which the shot had been fired. After that he drove to the burying-ground, where the little infants and Father Ossory lie; and I went on the box with the coachman, and showed the marquis everything. I couldn't help crying at sight of the graves, and the beautiful tombs placed over them by Lady Mulgrave. Monsieur de Grammont walked away by himself, after he had looked at them, and I didn't see what he thought of them. Next day, he sent me again to your agent, ma'am; and then I got your address, and was informed at the same time that all your remaining property, on which your income depended, had been burnt by an incendiary fire; and that, owing to neglect of the insurance on it, all was gone. It was this dreadful news, ma'am, that made me, with Sir Felix's leave, set out to Paris to seek you, and I have brought from him a draft on Mr. O'Callaghan's bank here, for money for your immediate use, ma'am.'

Mary here suspended her narrative, as she saw that I was unable to bear more at that moment.

After all, thought I, as I was left to myself, it is to Monsieur de Grammont's solicitude about me, that the discovery of my loss was made known to Sir Felix in time to save me! The dream which I had at Mulgrave Castle, in which Monsieur de Gram-

mont became my deliverer, by striking down the arm of the phantom that held the dagger over me, was now so strongly brought back to my recollection; that at this moment I might easily have been persuaded to subscribe to Mary's creed of omens and dreams.

'But Mary,' said I, when I again felt able to listen to her, 'you have not told me when you left Ireland, or when you arrived in Paris.'

'I left Ireland, ma'am, immediately after we had heard of your loss by the fire; and arrived in Paris only the very day before I met with you. On the same evening, Saturday, I went, according to the address I had received from your agent in Ireland, to the house of Madame de Corbière, in the Rue d'Angoulême; but not being able to see madame herself, I could not obtain the name of the place which you had removed to on leaving her house, until Sunday, the following day. And even then, ma'am, I was several hours in finding Fanchette's place; because she was known at Madame de Corbière's, only by her Christian name. When I did at last find the place, Fanchette's *entresol* was locked, and the porter at the lodge told me that she was out of town, and the lady living with her gone out with her children to walk. It was then, ma'am, that I went to the Champs Elysées to look for you; but not meeting with you, I returned to the *entresol*, where I was so happy as to find you, ma'am.'

‘But how came the dog to be with you, Mary?’

‘Sir Felix allowed me to bring him as a companion, ma’am; as I felt rather timid about travelling alone.’

‘Ah, Mary,’ said I, as I held out my hand to her, ‘you must be a happy creature, to have saved three human beings from death. And I am not less happy in owing my life, and that of my children, to your attachment and exertions. But you have still much more to tell me. Where did you leave the marquis?’

‘I thought, ma’am, that I had left him at the castle; but when I got to Paris, I found him here. And what surprised me more than this was, that I was told he had crossed the sea in the same vessel as myself, and had been all the way caring for me, and seeing that I had my due. I was certainly a little surprised when I found everything go so smoothly everywhere, especially at the Custom House, and at Rouen, where my trunks were opened and examined a second time. But one of the marquis’s grooms, who met him on his arrival at Havre, was a stranger to me, and, by his master’s orders, did everything, without my knowing that any one was acting for me. The marquis himself I never saw, till I got to this hotel, where I came through the advice of the same groom, whom I found at the coach-office waiting for me, and who seemed so very civil to me,—though he spoke but very little English,—that I took

his advice; and an hour after I got here, his noble and kind master called to speak to me, and to urge me to lose no time in looking for you, ma'am.'

'Ah, Léonce!' I exclaimed, mentally, 'why are you so kind to one who has caused you so much suffering?—And where is Monsieur de Grammont now, Mary?' I resumed; 'and when did you see him last?'

'I have seen him this very morning, ma'am; he calls here every day to inquire after you. It is he who sends the fresh flowers and the fine fruit, and who sent the dolls to the young ladies.'

'Do not tell me any more of the marquis, Mary; what you tell me gives me pain.'

'I am sure, ma'am, I don't think he would do anything wilfully to give you pain.'

'Oh, no, Mary, I am sure of that. But my strength is unequal to the weight of gratitude I feel for what he has done, for you as well as for me. But let us drop this subject for the present. You have not given me any information respecting Sir Felix's health.'

'He was very ailing for some time, ma'am, but he grew much better after we arrived at the castle; and Mrs. O'Connell told me that the great property he got at his lady's death would enable him to disencumber his estates, and sit down at ease for the remainder of his life.'

Just at this moment, two letters were brought in

from Ireland, one for me and the other for Mary. As I saw her eagerness to peruse hers, I desired her to go to her own room with her letter, and leave me to read mine. It was from my uncle, Sir Felix, and it was the first time I had attempted to read since my illness, having so far lost the power of sight, as not to be able to read even print, when I first began to recover. As my uncle always wrote like a lawyer—a very illegible hand—it was not without difficulty that I could pick out the meaning of his letter ; nor did I fully understand it, after half an hour's poring over it.

When Mary returned, I desired her to read it to me. As she had grown familiar with his hand while in attendance on my aunt, she found but little difficulty in deciphering it. The letter contained a most cordial invitation to myself and children, to visit Mulgrave Castle at the earliest possible time. The present season my uncle thought a charming one for reviewing my former home, and he hoped I should find everything in as good order as when his dear brother presided there. To render the visit more agreeable to me, he said, he had already invited my mother and my sister Caroline, and also his old friend and mine, Monsieur de Grammont ; and he hoped that in such society I might be able to renew all the delights of my childhood.

Oh, what a vision of bliss did this invitation open to me! It was too much of happiness! My fever returned for a few hours, but so slightly, as to indicate

a great increase of strength. Yet I was not allowed to see my children for two days after.

When they were again permitted to come into my room, I found them habited in entire new suits of apparel, in the sweetest taste imaginable, *à la Française*. It was well this surprise did not occur earlier, for, as it was, it almost turned my brain, thus to see my dear little ragamuffins so caparisoned, and transformed from skeletons to cherubs. 'Who has done this, Mary?' was my instant inquiry.

'I hope, ma'am,' said she, in her most deferential and modest manner, 'you will not be offended. But Monsieur de Grammont thought the season had changed so much since your illness, that the children must be suffering for want of a suitable change of dress; he therefore desired me to order whatever was necessary for the season at a house which he named, saying that he would himself settle the bills for the present, as it was impossible for you to attend to them in your present state of health, and he could easily arrange the affair with you, when you were sufficiently recovered to receive him. I think he must have been at the shop and left orders before hand, for when I got there, I found everything had been chosen and laid by, and several changes ordered of each article.'

My heart was so full, that I was unable to make any comment on what I heard; and after caressing the children, who were in boisterous spirits, I desired Mary to take them away.

It was not surprising that what I have related of the daily part performed by Monsieur de Grammont, for the comfort of myself and children, should affect me deeply, or that, after contemplating the metamorphoses of my children, I wept inexplicable tears as soon as I found myself alone. Oh, how I longed to be able to receive Monsieur de Grammont, and to thank him in person for his surpassing kindness ;—and yet not surpassing for him, it was his nature to be kind, and to do everything in the most perfect manner ; and although his attentions were of the most zealous and extraordinary kind, I was resolved to consider them only such, as he would have bestowed on any human being who needed them as much as I. I would not allow a single reminiscence to agitate me, or one tender thought to mingle with my gratitude, for did I not know that tenderness—

Is bliss, but to a certain bound !

I therefore endeavoured to wrap myself up in a cold and calculating gratitude, which should adjust the balance so nicely, as that nothing should be omitted that was due to Monsieur de Grammont for his zeal and attentions, and yet nothing offered in return, that could be construed into an appeal to our former relations. How truly are human beings ‘Spirits, hid in veils !’

The deep and enduring sentiment at the bottom of my heart, that rendered all expression impotent, was to be thus converted into cold and tranquil expressions

of acknowledgment, which must check any awakening of dormant affections. And was not this prudence? For how could I be so presumptuous as to imagine that the varied conflicts of life and death which I had passed through during a period of eleven years had touched me so lightly as to leave me unscathed, and essentially the same, and still capable of inspiring those sentiments which could alone justify me in cherishing my own?

Whilst I was thus playing the casuist, with throbbing pulses and a shrinking heart, I received a small externally elegant note, which, as I recognised the hand of the writer, was soon torn open, and I read as follows:—

‘Monsieur de Grammont presents his most respectful regards to Mrs. Fitzgerald, and begs to offer her his fervent felicitations, on the progress which he is informed she is making towards health. He would be most happy to be indulged with an interview with her for a few minutes, as soon as it may be permitted without injury. But although he has urgent reasons for this request, he entreats that it may not be granted, if there be the slightest apprehension of its proving hurtful to Mrs. Fitzgerald, in whose sufferings he has deeply participated, and in whose convalescence are wrapped up so many interests and hopes, unutterably dear to all connected with her.

‘Hôtel de Grammont,
May, 1827.’

The receipt of this note was an event which I at once felt to be replete with consequences, and yet such a request might have been expected even earlier. It was but a natural movement of courtesy to acquit itself of a conventional obligation. Why, then, not let it pass for what it was? But at least an answer must be returned, and after much effort, for I had not used my pen for two months, and had scarcely regained my sight, I wrote thus—

‘Mrs. Fitzgerald begs to acknowledge the receipt of Monsieur de Grammont’s note of this morning, and to assure him, that she could not allow any consideration for her health to deprive her of the pleasure of receiving his proposed visit at his first leisure. She owes him too much not to desire such an interview—far more, perhaps, than he can do; and although she is fully aware how little she will be able, in her present state of weakness, to do justice to the sentiments of gratitude which animate her, she feels that it will be the highest gratification to her to have an opportunity of expressing them.

‘Hôtel Montmorency.’

The morning of the morrow was fixed for this redoubted visit. Yes, that was the time that was to decide my fate for ever; either by filling the heavens with sunbeams, or by covering both earth and sky with ‘a darkness that might be felt!’ As my feelings arrived at this conclusion, I was startled at

myself, for I could not but observe that common sense was falling asleep; and that instead of the mere visit of courtesy, or perhaps of business, which had been arranged, imagination was converting it into an incident of doom. Where was that tranquil future that I had sketched for myself and my children, with which I was so lately satisfied, and which comprised but the simplest and most attainable objects? What had become of my thankfulness for the competent income that was now mine, and which was to obtain for me that which brought me originally to Paris? All this was for the moment forgotten, and the future was staked on the cast of a die—on a word—a look—a tone!

In such a world of nothings, imagination delights to revel; and while writing horoscopes in air, or tracing their shadows on the sands of earth, fulfils its own peculiar vocation.

While tormenting myself thus with the vagaries of both fate and fancy, Fanchette, my late kind hostess of the *entresol*, was ushered into my room by Mary.

As she had never seen me since my illness but in bed, she approached the sofa on which I was reclining, with warm greetings and congratulations on finding me there. Her joyous tone, which in far different circumstances had been wont to infuse a momentary cheerfulness into my heart, was so associated with the suffering endured under her roof, that now, as it struck on my ear, it affected me like the touch of the

torpedo ; and I shivered as I sent a fearful glance of retrospection on the straw beds, and famishing diet, which had brought me face to face with death in a most fearful form.

Fanchette, with her accustomed quick perception of the feelings of others, saw the shock that passed over me, and exclaimed,—

‘Ah, madame ! the sight of me pains you ! But I shall never forgive myself, if I am so unfortunate as always to remind you of the past. I assure you, madame, I am unable to sleep at night, even now, when I happen to think of you and your sufferings in my poor *entresol*.’ I was soon able to reassure Fanchette, and to thank her for all her kindness to me ; not without a secret hope, that at some future and not distant time, I might be able to offer her something more valuable than words.

The retrospects which the sight of this good creature led me to make, again recalled to me the miraculous deliverances which had been wrought for me by that unseen hand, in which are the issues of life. For while I owed far more than I could ever repay, in gratitude and affection to the immediate instruments of my rescue from death, yet that surprising conjunction of events, by which the great results in human life are produced, can only be accomplished by Him who holds equal empire over the visible and invisible things of our complicated existence.

CHAPTER XVI.

The heart that has been mourning
 O'er vanished dreams of love,
 Shall see them all returning,
 Like Noah's faithful dove !

I HAD been kept awake during the greater part of the night by harassing thoughts and conflicting feelings, and rose at a later hour than usual, unrefreshed and feverish; for did I not know that, with a skeleton form too weak to hold itself erect, and with the paleness of death on my cheek, and 'the shadow of death' on my eyelids, I was rushing on fate in that coming interview?

Mary, with her accustomed interest, was endeavouring to invigorate my nerves, by placing me in my chair before an open window; when a gentle rap at the door of the ante-chamber announced Monsieur de Grammont.

Mary ushered him into the room, and withdrew. As I had determined to conceal my feelings, I endeavoured to assume a tranquil exterior. But it would not do. The smothered anxiety became a paralyzing oppression. As Monsieur de Grammont

entered, I falteringly rose, and moved forward to receive him. Our eyes met—and in that look of unutterable tenderness and deep sympathy, with which we had been wont to meet so many years since. ‘Helen!’ was his only word of greeting; and though scarcely audible, the magic of his voice had reached my soul. I staggered, and should have fallen, but for the supporting arm that prevented it. Léonce led me to my chair, and, kneeling before me, buried his face in his hands for some minutes in silence; during which we were both lost in feelings of tumultuous joy and sorrow. For had we not already, in a single glance, recognised in each other a record of those years of absence and of suffering to which we had both been consigned? And were we not once more restored to each other, and to those sentiments of deep and imperishable attachment which had been so long suppressed? And yet, when we attempted to speak, in what language were our feelings uttered? Not in words of love, or even of friendship; but in tears that would not be repressed.

As some degree of tranquillity returned, Monsieur de Grammont once more offered me his hand; that hand which had been twice offered before, and which was now accepted with unutterable gratitude, though I felt that I yet fluctuated betwixt life and death. An interval of many years was thus obliterated; yet I still struggled with an irrepressible emotion, which

only tears could assuage. For what a miserable gift was I bestowing, in myself, on Léonce ! Though our fate was now in our own hands, instead of in those of a prejudiced and inflexible uncle, we had still mutual misgivings of what our future might prove, and almost feared again to separate, lest some untoward occurrence might intervene, and prevent a reunion. Léonce, who knew much more of the mysterious power that had coiled itself around me than I could know, was well aware that I lived but on the sufferance of the Jesuit.

He looked very pale, and deep lines of thought and suffering were stamped on his fine face, rendering it, if possible, more than ever interesting to me. There was also an air of delicate health about him, which alarmed me ; but when I inquired respecting it, he assured me it was occasioned only by the anxiety he had so long felt, for my restoration to health and to himself.

‘For what did I know of your feelings towards me?’ said he. ‘Time and circumstance, which wear out so many hearts, might not have spared yours. You had become a mother. Had maternal affection exhausted your heart of other affections ? or might not sorrow and suffering so unparalleled as yours, have bereaved you of the power to love ? It was thus I questioned ; knowing, however, that an interview would decide my fate ; for I felt myself as *exigéant* as ever of that sympathy you had once

bestowed on me, and which could alone satisfy my heart, and which, if wanting now, must leave me in an eternal isolation. But your unchanged heart averts that wretched fate. Oh, Helen !' he continued, in a suppliant voice, ' you *must* recover, that you may bless me ; you *must* recover, that you may also bless your children, and that we may return together to that dear home of your infancy where we first met, and where you taught me first to love.'

Dreams of early life thus awakened, all the sorrows of our past lives were for the moment buried in forgetfulness ; and we began to realize the idea that we might once more find happiness on earth, spite of the power that, walking in darkness, still pursued me.

We turned our thoughts from this menacing evil to Him who is the well-spring of life, and in whom are treasured up all the sources of human felicity, both for time and eternity.

* * * * *

On the following morning, by order of Monsieur de Grammont, an invalid carriage was brought to my door, in which I was placed on a bed, under a canopy of green silk, and taken out to the Bois de Boulogne, Mary accompanying me, and Monsieur de Grammont riding on horseback by the side of my carriage.

The sweet zephyrs of May—that month of all others which wakes the heart and inspires happiness—fanned my brows, and infused into me new life.

Meanwhile, Léonce, as my escort, was flitting backwards and forwards before my charmed sight, and words and tones of magic import were addressing themselves to my listening ear. All heaven and earth seemed to me bathed in bright beams of light and beauty.

In about a week, I was able to dispense with the invalid-carriage, and to ride out in an ordinary chariot, with Léonce by my side. In another week, a furnished house was hired at 'St. Germain-en-Laye,' for my family and myself; near which, at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, Monsieur de Grammont took apartments for himself. This experiment formed the last of a series, which had been successfully arranged for my recovery. In the charming air of this salubrious locality we lived from morning till night, as the weather permitted, in the open air; now rambling through the cool paths of its beautiful wood, or sauntering in the shades of its park, or contemplating the expanded and varied views, stretched out in distance, in the valley before its elevated terrace. The children grew far handsomer and stronger than I had ever seen them; and Mary and Rover also seemed to be as much benefited as Monsieur de Grammont and myself.

In a few weeks, a wonderful change had taken place in my appearance and health; and I was able to accompany Monsieur de Grammont on horseback every day, and to employ the intervals of this exer-

cise in attentions to my children, and other long neglected duties. At other times I listened to the reading of *Léonce*, whose volume, however, was only made tributary to our pleasure, by furnishing thoughts and themes for the endless conversation with which we every moment interrupted the enunciation of its pages. Happy as I had been at my first restoration to an intercourse that had always been blissful, it was not until strength had returned to my frame, and health to my pulses, that I was capable of understanding the full value of that blessedness which awaited, me in becoming the wife of *Léonce*. I had now no care left, except that of regaining such an amount of firm health as should enable me to enjoy the blessings of my lot. What a change! No wonder that, on looking at the past, I sometimes trembled for the permanency of that cloudless sky which now shed its heavenly brightness on everything around me.

CHAPTER XVII.

My vows of true allegiance here I plight,

Thy steps to guard, in thy protection fight ;

By counsel aid, and by my arm defend,

And prove myself in all, thy champion and thy friend.

MRS. TIGHE.

MONSIEUR DE GRAMMONT availed himself of my improved health to return to Paris for a few days, in order to complete the arrangements preliminary to our marriage.

His Majesty Charles Dix, whose formal consent to the marriage of a peer of France was indispensable, had already signified his approbation of our union ; but the written documents remained to be signed.

Although I brought Monsieur de Grammont no dower, he insisted on settling a jointure on me, suitable to his own rank and fortune. The legacy of five thousand pounds sterling, left me by my aunt, he prevailed on me to settle irrevocably on my eldest daughter, Dora ; while he himself settled on Caroline a similar amount. He thus became a father to my children, in advance, investing and securing the pro-

perty bestowed on them with all the precision and precaution of a practised man of business.

In becoming the wife of Monsieur de Grammont, I felt it necessary to myself that Monsieur de Carryfort should be called upon for an explanation of the insinuation so injurious to my honour and character which he had allowed himself to make in the only interview with him which I had ever had.

The Murphys, who, I had no doubt, were the authors of all the wrong I had sustained in his opinion, were both dead; and before this, it must surely have been made known to Monsieur de Carryfort that they and the Brians were identical.

This latter fact ought to have led him to inquire into the justice of statements, influencing his opinion of me, which rested solely on their authority.

To make Monsieur de Grammont perfectly *au fait* on this, to me, important subject, I had placed in his hands, at his going to Paris, the journal of my life, so far as it had proceeded. It is unnecessary for me to say how much he had been affected by its perusal; but his indignation at the conduct of Monsieur de Carryfort was extreme; and he agreed with me, in the necessity of requiring from him an explanation of it.

Meanwhile his devotion to me and mine in absence was expressed daily to me by letter, in terms far stronger, and if possible more tender than ever. In one of his later letters, he gave me the following

account of an interview which he had sought and obtained of Monsieur de Carryfort, agreeably to our mutual resolve :—

‘After I had been at the Irish College, and extorted from the president information respecting those calumnies which had been foisted on your uncle as verities, I waited by appointment on Monsieur de Carryfort, yesterday morning, at his hôtel.

‘On arriving there, I was ushered into a charming *salon* on the ground floor, opening upon the lawn at the back of his house. Perhaps, my love, the same room as that in which you were once so disdainfully and cruelly treated by your uncle. He did not keep me waiting an instant ; but, entering with a cordial air, walked straight up to me, with an extended hand, as if confident of my friendly grasp.

‘I had forgotten, that in requesting this interview, I had said nothing of its object, or I might have been more tolerant of the confidence with which he assured himself of my cordiality.

‘As he closely approached the spot on which I stood, like an automaton, to await his advance, his proffered, but unrecognised hand, fell to his side. After exchanging bows of courtesy, we stood before each other with cynical looks, and a rising hostility of expression. Monsieur de Carryfort broke the silence, by saying—

‘“Am I to understand your request of an interview with me, Monsieur le Marquis, as one of business, or of courtesy ?”

“Neither, Monsieur le Comte—unless justice may come under the category of business.’

‘We were both still standing, and growing each moment more and more erect.

‘Monsieur de Carryfort drew a chair towards me, and took one himself. He was evidently dubious of my object, and, determined not to commit himself, awaited what I had to say.

“Monsieur le Comte,’ I began, ‘perhaps I owe you an explanation of the bearing which your presence inspires, and which I could not have allowed myself to assume, without the strongest conviction that I should betray the cause which brings me here, were I to yield but for a moment to that natural reverence for age and distinction, which otherwise were so much your due.

“I, however, confess myself in a singular position, when I demand of you redress for a wrong which you have done to one of your own blood, without first exhibiting the authority on which I act. But you must give me credit in advance for a right to make the demand.’

“Monsieur le Marquis,’ said the count, as he rose hurriedly from his chair, ‘your language is of a kind which I am not accustomed to hear. Nevertheless, as you have proffered an explanation of a *brusquerie*, which I am aware is foreign to your character, I will give you a hearing; for as yet, I have no idea of your drift.’

‘I had risen at the same moment with the count, and we stood before each other in a state of feeling not very favourable to explanation. But it was necessary to proceed, and I said to him—‘As a preliminary to my embassy, Monsieur le Comte, I beg to say, that I am here at the request of your niece, Mrs. Fitzgerald, to obtain of you an explanation of some offensive words addressed by you to her, some months since, in this house. And having uttered a name rendered sacred by the virtues and sufferings of its possessor, I have probably recalled to your recollection, Monsieur le Comte, the interview in question. Is it necessary that I delineate that interview, or do you recollect the sentiments and language you addressed to Mrs. Fitzgerald on that occasion?’

“Monsieur le Marquis, your application to me on behalf of my niece for such an object as you profess, is, permit me to say, somewhat singular. Why has not my niece applied to me herself? Can it be supposed that an intercessor is necessary betwixt relatives so nearly connected? And on what grounds do you, sir, take upon yourself a service so Quixotic as that of demanding justice of me, in the name of my niece, for wrongs of which I am accused towards her?”

“I wave the sarcasm, Monsieur le Comte, with which you have embellished your demand, of the grounds on which I have presumed to act in an

affair so delicate. I have, however, already had the honour to inform you that I am here at the request of Mrs. Fitzgerald ; and I beg to add, that I am here also on my own account, as the affianced husband of Mrs. Fitzgerald ; for the honour of whose hand I should sue in vain, until the wrong that has been done her by you, sir, shall have been redressed. For although his majesty has already signified his approbation of our union, Mrs. Fitzgerald's keen sense of what is due to female honour makes it necessary to herself that the wrong in question be explained.'

'Monsieur de Carryfort here advanced towards me, again with an extended hand, which I could not a second time decline, saying, as he did so, 'Monsieur le Marquis, the character in which you have now announced yourself gives you so undoubted a right to make the inquiries you have addressed to me, that I cannot a moment longer maintain a hostile feeling towards you on their account, or a reproachful thought of my niece for prompting you to make them. Question me as you please, therefore ; I will answer you frankly.'

'Ah, Monsieur le Comte, it is easy for me to question you of the injury which Mrs. Fitzgerald was compelled to endure—I would it were as easy to believe that it can be satisfactorily redressed. But how will you now atone to that lacerated heart, which, in want and sorrow, supplicated you in vain

only to be heard in her own defence? What explanation can you offer to a pure and high-minded woman, whom you accused of making, forsooth, 'a dubious *début* in the gay city of Paris?' How will you explain that contempt for your kneeling and broken-hearted niece, which caused you to spurn her from your presence, expressing, at the same time, a fear that in coupling your name with hers in an official document, for the benefit of her son, you had compromised your own respectability?'

'The count exhibited much agitation while I was thus forcing on him a retrospect so mortifying to himself. But endeavouring to carry it off with an air of *nonchalance*, he said, 'Monsieur le Marquis, it is well that, having given you unbounded licence in questioning me, I have also promised you perfect frankness in reply. Nevertheless, I fear it may be somewhat difficult to exculpate myself completely, either in your opinion or my own, from a charge of precipitancy in the judgment I formed of my niece. I cannot but regret the very serious mistake, under which I assumed that part towards her which you refer to, and which, I am now willing to acknowledge, was adopted on fallacious grounds. But I will endeavour, in extenuation of my mistake, to state to you briefly what those grounds were. Pray, Monsieur, do me the honour to resume your seat, and give me a hearing. You are, I presume, aware,

being in the confidence of Mrs. Fitzgerald, that her object in coming to Paris was to claim access to her son; and that she had supplied herself with the necessary documents to prove her right to make that claim. While these were in course of examination by the Council of the Irish College, and advancing rapidly towards success, several letters were received by the Council, from some one who must have been aware of the residence of the claimant, informing them that she was associated and living with notorious female swindlers. More than this, she was charged in these letters with having obtained fraudulently various sums of money from some friends of the *Marquis de Grammont*, whose name was influentially used in obtaining them.' At this point I lost all self-command, and interrupting the count with irrepressible vehemence, exclaimed, 'Stop, sir! I can hear no more. Answer me but one question, and I will exempt you from any other—Who was the writer of these iniquitous accusations? You do not reply, Monsieur le Comte.' In fact, your uncle stood like one petrified by a sudden conviction of his own infatuated credulity, and a third time I asked who was the author, before I obtained the damning avowal that—he was indeed anonymous. 'Anonymous! Was it, then, Monsieur, on *anonymous* assertion that you suffered the name and honour of your niece, a young, beautiful, and defenceless woman, to be prostrated in the dust? Had you forgotten

the noble stock from which she sprang, and the pure blood that flowed in her veins? Was the daughter of such a mother as Lady Mulgrave—and, I will add, was the niece of Monsieur de Carryfort, to be thus accused and condemned, without evidence, without inquiry, and unheard, by a calumniator without a name? And yet, when she would have defended herself—when she would have explained to you every circumstance of her life—you spurned her from your presence, and commanded her from your house with bitterness and insult, that must have broken any female heart less heroic or less conscious of innocence than that of your transcendent niece!’

‘The Count de Carryfort quailed under this additional retrospect of his injustice and inhumanity—but made no reply.

‘At length, excessively irritated, I moved towards the door, saying, as I did so, ‘What message do you authorize me to bear from you, Monsieur le Comte, to Mrs. Fitzgerald?’

‘‘Monsieur le Marquis,’ said the old man, ‘you have been severe; but I will not complain of you, since you have placed in its proper light the neglect—for you must not call it by a harsher name—of which I have been guilty. But I was annoyed—disgraced—by Mrs. Fitzgerald’s place of residence; for it is quite true that the women in whose house she was domiciled, were recognised swindlers.

‘‘Was it, then, so very incredible, that the plausible

charge of being leagued with them should have found countenance with me, after the credence which had been given to it by the college council ?”

“Monsieur le comte, as it was an impossibility that such a charge against Mrs. Fitzgerald could be founded in truth, I cannot admit of any excuse for giving it credence, for a single moment, on the ground of probability. What is impossible, can never become probable. If you had condescended to listen to the explanation which Mrs. Fitzgerald offered you of her position in the Rue St. Florentin, you must of necessity have exculpated her from even the knowledge of any impropriety, in the residence into which she had been thrown by accident. But, sir, you seem not yet to know that the woman who called herself by the name of Murphy, was but the Margaret Brian, who for so many years persecuted the late husband and family of your sister, Lady Mulgrave ; the suspected assassin who fired into the undefended cottage of your widowed niece ; the blood-hound who pursued her everywhere ; and finally, the fiend who defamed her name and honour, when she was severed from the protection of society by her poverty, without even giving offence to her only relative, and natural defender, in this (to her) foreign land. There cannot be,’ I continued, ‘a single doubt that Margaret Brian was the author of at least some of the defamatory letters in question. For though criminating in them her own name, she could not

the highest endowments of mind, she is a perfect child of nature, frank, forgiving, sincere, and pure. What, indeed, could have preserved her untarnished, in the atmosphere of a residence like Margaret Brian's, but that halo of innocence which encircles and defends the pure in heart ?'

'The Count de Carryfort was either touched by a sense of wrong, or humbled by the conviction of it, I know not which. We parted with many expressions of regret on his part, and a promise of visiting you, my beloved Helen, within a week, at your present residence.'

The day after I had received the foregoing, Monsieur de Grammont returned to his apartments in the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and in a few minutes after his arrival, was at my house in the park.

As ten days had passed since we met, he greeted me with excessive emotion, telling me I was so much improved in appearance, that I was Helen Mulgrave again, not only to the heart but to the eye, and that I must have been imposing on him when I called myself by another name.

As he had read my journal during his absence, I had a feeling of apprehension at meeting him, after all that its pages had disclosed of my devotion to himself. It seemed to me that my heart had now been so entirely laid open to him, that nothing remained to be revealed, and that we should both sink into vapidty.

But it was not so. The beaming confidence of an undoubting attachment, which now displayed itself in his every look and word, fell on my heart like the dew of morning on the parched earth.

Léonce, while commenting with me on the statements which he had made to my uncle, informed me, to my utter astonishment, that during his stay in Paris, he had had an interview with the surviving daughter of Brian (*alias* Murphy), who, for a valuable consideration which he offered her, had been induced to place in his hands the letters of her mother's Irish correspondents, amongst which he found many of the Jesuit's letters; and though there was a visible break in the sequence, enough of it remained to justify much more than he had asserted respecting the part which the Jesuit had borne, in conjunction with Brian, relative to myself. The revelations of these letters, he said, disclosed a plot of the most diabolical kind, and damning to its author, although wrapped up in an obscure and ambiguous phraseology, which could only be deciphered by a man of the world.

'But it is my intention,' he said, 'as soon as we are indissolubly united, to take Rénel in hand, and deliver him over to judicial investigation, on the ground of that apparently *forged will*, which has been made the instrument of your persecutions. The experiment might prove unsuccessful; but it would show to the world at least one instance of the nature

and extent of that unhallowed power which the Romish church confers on her priests; and while thus serving the cause of a secular justice, would also exhibit the desecration and mockery which are made of a religion called Christian, by the practices of its own priests.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

The record of what injuries you did us,
 Though written in our flesh, we shall remember
 As things but done by chance !

SHAKESPEARE.

MY uncle arrived at St. Germain, as he proposed, and in an interview which I had with him alone, he made the most ample acknowledgments of the injustice he had done me ; and placing in my hands the letters on which his erroneous impressions had been founded, he exclaimed, ‘ Burn them, when you have satisfied yourself of their author. I wish it were as easy to obliterate the wrong they have done, as it is to destroy them.’ On examining the letters, I found it impossible to believe otherwise than that Murphy herself, and the Jesuit, had been the writers of them. As I traced these proofs of a malignity so inhuman, I wondered that I had survived its effects ; and still more, that the damage of it, which had so nearly destroyed both myself and family, should have been so speedily repaired. Murphy’s end was untimely ; and the universal history of crime proves that there is a retribution, even in

this life, which is seldom, if ever, evaded by the criminal.

If the eyes of evil-doers could be opened to behold the spiritual agency at work around them, they would discern 'the wages of sin' in every appalling form, hovering about them, and tracking their steps, until at length they are arrested by the invisible hand that terminates their career.

When my uncle had been apprized of the horrid manner of Mrs. Murphy's end, he exclaimed, that it galled him to the heart to reflect on his having been made the tool of such a fiend; and that he could no otherwise atone to me for the wrong of which he had been guilty, than by making me his heiress, and leaving his whole property to me—which, indeed, he said he had already done, by his will, a copy of which he placed in my hands for perusal.

'You will find,' said he, 'that I have encumbered my estates with only an annuity of twelve thousand francs per annum to your sister Caroline, making no provision for my sister, Lady Mulgrave, because I know that the Baron de Wallenstein, my brother, has already provided for her, in case of her surviving him.'

As he ceased speaking, I felt a painful oppression on me, and could not help saying, 'My dear uncle, I am for ever indebted to you for your kind intentions; but do not thus crush me with your bounty. Take back your estates; I shall not want them; and

it seems to me that so immense a donation will cause me to feel as though it had been exacted of you. Take back your gift, therefore, my dear uncle, and let me have the pleasure of feeling that we are reconciled friends, without so costly a pledge of it.'

It was in vain I thus expressed the pain I felt at the greatness of the obligation imposed on me. My uncle replied that what he had done was irrevocable, and that he hoped it could not but be a satisfaction to me, on reflection, to know that thereby my son, to whom hereafter his estates would pass, would be thus provided for, if the Jesuit should fail to restore to him his father's estates.

'I know well,' he continued, 'the excellent man who is about to become your husband, and how much he is above all sordid views. Nevertheless, it ought to be some little gratification to you to know that you do not come entirely portionless to him.'

I then told him of the settlement which Monsieur de Grammont had made on my daughters, at which my uncle shed tears, as he congratulated me on my happy prospects.

In spite of all this, I had still a consuming anxiety at my heart for a sight of my son, whom I had never yet been allowed to see. Sometimes I fancied he might be dead, or ruined in health, or mind, by the severity of the discipline through which I knew he must pass.

When Monsieur de Grammont returned, I of

course related to him what had passed between my uncle and myself. He was very much impressed with the magnanimity of my uncle, in the ample and unhesitating regrets he had expressed. But I fancied he would rather I had been without his estates, which, he said, had come too late; and that for himself, he must drink deep of the waters of Lethe, before he could think of those sufferings, without bitterness, which it had been so much in my uncle's power to alleviate, but which he had preferred to aggravate. 'Nevertheless,' he continued, 'man must not sit in judgment on his fellow. We know not the peculiar organization of that mind which, without becoming actually criminal, unconsciously falls short of virtue and humanity.'

Monsieur de Grammont had consulted Mary respecting the position and circumstances of my good Fanchette; and having informed himself thereon, settled an annuity on her, which left to her option the continuance or relinquishment of her present laborious occupation. She was overwhelmed with gratitude at this provision for her old age—having already attained her sixtieth year—and she came to St. Germain expressly to thank her benefactor; when, with her own characteristic vivacity, she wept, and laughed, and wept again, in endeavouring to express her gratitude.

It was thus that Monsieur de Grammont relieved me of every worldly solicitude, for others as well as

for myself; and I had the prospect of being able to assume the beloved name that awaited me, almost without a care. I had lived so many years in loneliness of heart, that to be again in possession of that felicity which arises from a reciprocation of thought and feeling with a companionable mind, was of itself happiness. Yet thus surrounded—almost overwhelmed, with happiness—both in possession and in prospect, undefinable anxieties sometimes assailed me, which I could only relieve by prayer, or conciliate with tears. The storms of my life had indeed apparently subsided, but ‘the cloud returned after the rain,’ and the shadows of the past often fell on my path. Even in my brightest moments, in the society of him whose fine taste embellished every thought he uttered, and whose ardent spirit infused energy into the very nothings of discourse, the question, ‘Can this last?’ would whisper itself to my soul, and quicken enjoyment to agony. But how can *he* be expected to step firmly who has for years been doomed to walk over quicksands, or tread the brinks of an abyss?

I had been inured to feel the supports of earth so often sinking from under me, that I had not yet learnt to plant my foot securely even on a rock, and hardly to repose in peace, under the blessed ‘Gourd,’ which celestial hands had reared around me, and which, as yet, had disclosed no ‘worm at its root.’

* * * * *

As there was still much preliminary business to be attended to before our marriage could take place, Monsieur de Grammont returned again to Paris. The day after his arrival there, Monsieur de Carryfort waited upon him at his hôtel, in due form to announce to him his having made me his heiress, and to express his fervent approbation of his becoming his nephew ; proffering, at the same time, to perform the service at the wedding ceremony of giving me away, in case my uncle Sir Felix, who had volunteered to perform it, did not arrive in time.

It had been proposed by my uncle, that the marriage should take place from his house ; and my mother and sister had been invited to meet me there, with the Baron de Wallenstein, who had expressed himself desirous of assisting at the ceremony, although his official duties at the court of Vienna rendered it doubtful whether he might be able to accomplish his wish.

My dear children had not yet been informed of the coming event ; yet their chief subject of thought, of talk, and of inquiry, was their '*chère* Monsieur de Grammont,' as they called him. It seemed, indeed, as though he were the very object and impulse of life to our whole household—Mary not excepted.

To add to our accumulating joys, Sir Lucius Mac Neil and my sister Dora were expected daily in England, and it was hoped they might arrive there in time to reach Paris, and assist at the ceremony so anxiously anticipated.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ah ! sans doute que dans les mystères de notre nature, aimer, encore aimer, est ce qui nous est resté de notre héritage céleste.—
MADAME DE STAEL.

WE were already in July, and only a few days remained betwixt us and the wedding day, when as I sat at a window of my house at St. Germain, a carriage at full speed drove up to my door. Léonce sprang out of it, and, absorbed in him, I saw, for the first instant, only him ; but as, instead of entering with his usual bound into the hall to meet me, he turned to speak to some one whom he had left in the carriage, I peered into it to see whom it might be, and beheld my mother, my sister Caroline, and my own dear lost child ! In a moment we were locked in each other's arms !

This restoration of objects so long lost and so dear to me, was like a resurrection from the dead ; for until very lately, I had cast away every hope of seeing them again in this world. And now, to meet them under the circumstances in which they found me was an event to dream of, but scarcely to realize.

Still, here we were, once more together ; and though he who had been the key-stone of the arch

on which everything that constituted our family felicity had once rested, was no longer amongst us, he had been replaced by another, who had become a pillar of our house, and was no less a centre of attraction, round which our affections congregated almost in idolatry.

My son had been torn from me about a year ago, at a time when I could least spare anything I loved. Since then, I had passed through the severest trials, and attained the highest earthly happiness of which our nature is capable. As crowning events to this, the restoration of my son, and the sight of my dear mother and sister, left me for the moment nothing more to wish for. My happiness was so great, that as I passed from the embraces of my mother and child to those of my sister and Léonce, I felt as the patriarch Jacob had once felt, and exclaimed with him, 'Now let me die!'

My little Frederic was at first formal and timid, and scarcely seemed to remember me; but after I had caressed him awhile, he looked earnestly in my face, and began to cry. When his sisters appeared, there was again a little dubiousness about him; but the vivacity with which they clasped him in their arms soon awakened recollection, and the young trio were not long in becoming boisterously happy.

Léonce then gave me a history of the efforts by which at length, unknown to me, he had circumvented the Jesuit executor, but which had not been

accomplished without applying to Charles Dix himself. Fortunately, the application was made at a time when all Paris was in a ferment respecting Jesuit intrigue, which, it was universally asserted, was making its way into private families, as well as public bodies, and destroying their peace. A project was proposed, even in the Chamber of Deputies, for expelling the Jesuits from Paris, which was rendered nugatory, just as it was expected to pass into law, by the discovery that, as the law of France ignored the existence of the Jesuits, it was a practical solecism to propose to expel them.

When Léonce had left the room, and I was able to contemplate, with undivided attention, the traces of time on my mother and sister, they both seemed to be somewhat impaired by it; but before an hour had passed, I had become so familiar with the slight shades of difference, that I no longer saw anything in them at all at variance with my dotting recollection of what they had formerly been.

My mother expressed a hope, that a bank-note which she had sent me by post, at the time I applied to the Baron de Wallenstein for pecuniary assistance, had been useful to me. She had sent it, she said, unknown to her brother, who had grown parsimonious, and could not be prevailed on to believe that my destitution could be literal. 'I hoped,' said she, 'that the baron's incredulity might be well-founded; but I knew the veracity of my dear Helen, and

dared not doubt, though I shuddered in believing, her statement.'

Thus carried back to those fearful sufferings which had passed away, I could answer but by tears, and only told my mother, while I thanked her for her bounty, that I had never received her remittance.

My mother was very much affected at recognising Mary as one of the household, who, on her part, shed tears, as she kissed my mother's hand.

When Rover was brought to her, the dog instantly recollected both her and my sister, and gave them so hearty a greeting in his own way, that laces and silks were placed in no small peril by him. But my mother was so delighted with his honest joy, that she would not allow it to be checked.

In a few hours I was again alone, for even my darling boy had departed, to return to the college for the present; with a proviso, however, secured by Monsieur de Grammont, that he should be allowed to visit me occasionally.

There is a peculiar feeling of isolation immediately succeeding the departure of those we love, how sure soever we may fancy ourselves of meeting them again soon. On this occasion, I had not been able, as Léonce whispered his parting words of tenderness, to withhold my tears. It was a childishness for which I gravely remonstrated with myself, as soon as he was out of sight. Almost sated with happiness, I was already spoilt by it, and could not endure a

moment's suspension of it. I am ashamed to record that my weakness so affected Léonce, that although it was too late, after escorting my mother and sister to the Rue d'Anjou, to return to me again that evening, he was at my breakfast table at eight o'clock on the following morning.

There were no railroads in those days, or this would not have been a remarkable feat of locomotion. But a ride of twelve miles on horseback before breakfast, on a scorching July morning, for so paltry an object as that of drying the tears, not of sorrow, but of weakness, would have put me ill at ease with myself, had I not been so great a gainer by the enterprise. Monsieur de Grammont brought with him an invitation to me from my uncle de Carryfort, to join my mother and sister immediately at his house, and to remain there until my wedding day.

As my arrangements for leaving my children for a few weeks with their governess at St. Germain were already made, I was soon prepared for removal. But Léonce and I did not set out for Paris together without lingering looks at a place to which I was so much indebted for the treasures of health which I was bearing away with me, and in which we were leaving our children.

It was not possible for me to enter my uncle de Carryfort's house, shadowed as it was by dark memories, without deep emotion. Yet, after the first few hours, I found it a delightful, and an affecting

change to be in Paris, and in a family circle of near relatives.

I was now already within the vestibule of happiness; yet my experience of life had taught me, in speculating on the future, to be more fearful of failure than hopeful of fruition. Is not the Jesuit still on my track? I shudderingly asked myself. Perhaps Léonce had similar feelings; for as I met his serious gaze, he exclaimed, with anxiety, 'After the twentieth, it will no longer be a hope—a vision—but a reality. Life will be spared till then. Let us not doubt it! After that, we will brave the Jesuit in concert!'

The day of fate was so near, that we began to feel impatient for the arrival of the distant guests invited to its celebration; but we approached its very eve without hearing anything of my sister's arrival from India, or of the Baron de Wallenstein's, or Sir Felix Mulgrave's.

Happily, at eleven o'clock on that evening, a hasty messenger from Meurice's hôtel came to announce to Monsieur de Carryfort, that Sir Lucius Mac Neil and his family had arrived there. The Baron de Wallenstein, from Vienna, was announced shortly after, and our party now only wanted Sir Felix; but as Monsieur de Carryfort had offered to officiate in his stead, we were able to proceed without him, if he should not arrive before morning.

CHAPTER XX.

Now, tune anew the lyre, and touch the strings
Which tell of joy, and Love without his wings.

I ROSE at the dawn on the following morning, to look out on the eastern sky for prognostics of the weather. It had a lowering appearance, but the dew was heavy on grass and flower, which was a favourable indication; and the birds were singing so merrily in the garden overlooked by my chamber window, that I returned to my bed again, in full hope of sunshine, to gild the day so full of promise to the future. I fell asleep so soundly as not to dream, and only awoke at seven, roused by a band of music under my window. Amongst other airs that were performed, was that of, 'Now, with grief no longer bending,' &c. As it struck on my delighted ear, I heard in it the voice of Léonce, who, I knew, must have specially ordered it for the occasion.

The words of the song naturally led me to contrast the present with the past, and the antithesis was so violent as to inspire distrust of the future; for the idea of the *Jesuit* still haunted me like a spectre, although happiness had never before hailed me under circumstances so promising. But under the

influence of sweet sounds, I passed from this distrust to joyous hope; and as my heart waked to devotional gratitude, I adored him who delivers us out of the furnace of affliction.

As Mary answered my bell, she informed me that Monsieur de Grammont was already in my boudoir, awaiting me there; and anxious to see me as soon as possible. I was not long in making my appearance. As I entered the room, he was pacing it up and down with quick steps. I was struck by the expression of his countenance, and feared that some untoward occurrence must have taken place. Trembling, I knew not why, I looked inquiringly at him.

‘Fear nothing,’ said he, ‘I am the messenger of frightful intelligence, which, though it must shock, will not afflict you. The last of those fearful beings, that for years have haunted your path, has vanished for ever. The Jesuit is no more.’

He paused as I covered my face, overcome by the unexpected intelligence. In a few seconds he proceeded.

‘A horrible mystery hangs over this apparently premature death, which seems to have been produced by poison, received in the sacramental wafer* at the bed-side of a dying man. The name of that man, you will hardly guess. It forms a singular coincidence with past events.

‘The man is said to be *the parish priest*, who for-

* Note 13.

merly, in league with Brian, carried off your father's jewels, and was supposed eventually to have murdered her. You are aware that the homicide had been under the protection of the church, ever since that occurrence, in a quarter of Paris inaccessible to the police. Finding himself dying of an incurable malady, but still capable of crime, he contrived, in receiving the last sacraments from the hands of Father Rénel, whom he had solicited to administer them, to introduce poisoned wafers, both for himself and his victim, so that they are both dead. This is all that has yet transpired on the subject. I have had a moment's interview with your uncle De Carryfort, this morning, respecting it; and he is of opinion, with me, that Frederic may now be easily released from the guardianship of the remaining executor; when both the dear child and his estates will come under our own immediate guardianship.'

I was so much stunned by the suddenness of the information I had received, that I did not at the first moment perceive all its momentous consequences to myself. But an instant's reflection showed me that, by the death of the Jesuit, I was at once rescued both from Popery and the 'grasp of the priests.' The galling chains that had so long fettered my very soul fell off as by an angel's touch, and the profoundest joy would have taken possession of my heart, if it had not been checked by the horrid manner in which my deliverance had been effected. Léonce and I

sat awhile in silence, and forgetfulness that it was our wedding morning.

As the recollection of it recurred, the coincidence of the day and the deliverance increased our happiness. The striking of a clock reminded us that time was advancing, and that we might be too late for the appointed hour. I was therefore compelled to insist on Léonce's instant departure, who, while he affected to rebel, after blessing and thanking me for the part I was about to assume, in words never to be forgotten, hurried away.

Scarcely had the door closed after him, when my sister Dora entered. What a meeting was ours, after so many years of absence, and so much suffering! When the first transports of our greeting were over, Dora, with all the juvenile gaiety of former years, exclaimed,

‘And so, my little Nelly, after having been so long in the crucible, you are come out of it alive, and are really going to marry your first, if not your only love! Charming! Your husband, too, a knight of romance from the realms of fancy, if he were not so decidedly and visibly a reality, that one is delighted to acknowledge the supremacy of fact over fiction. You must permit a little effusion of nonsense, my darling Nelly, on this happy morning, as a measure of safety to my heart, which is so full of joyous agitation at this happy termination of your sorrows, that I must either faint or cry, if obliged to

suppress its emotions. I have so long doted on Léonce, that now he is about to become my brother, my love for him exceeds all bounds. When he first arrived amongst us in India, he was in a most deplorable state of melancholy, and beset at the same time by many captivating young women, whom only such a preoccupied heart as his could have resisted. At that time, seeing how wretched he was, I should have been happy had he been able to make choice of one of them. Only think, dear Nelly, what a world of mischief I should have occasioned, had I succeeded in my little innocent efforts to make him forget you! I tremble to think of it. Oh, how much better Providence orders our affairs than we could order them for ourselves!

‘When he had been with us about two months, we heard of your having become a widow, and of your utterly ruined fortunes, both at the same time, but almost two years after the death of Mr. Fitzgerald. The news agitated us all to an excessive degree, but Monsieur de Grammont was so changed by it that we hardly knew him. He was like one raised from the dead. The chronic maladies of mind and health, which had so long been depressing him, all disappeared at once, and he became active and energetic, in spite of the climate. Within a week after this news, he was on his way to England. I should like to hear an account of your first meeting, Nelly, but this is no time for retrospect.’

While listening to my dear Dora, and gazing on her bright and charming face, I had forgotten time ; but recollecting ourselves, we abruptly terminated our interview.

After a short interval in my own chamber, I returned again to the boudoir, and found Léonce waiting there to take me to the breakfast-room, where we joined our own family circle, amongst whom was the Baron de Wallenstein, whom I had never before seen.

My two uncles were most *affectionate* in their reception of me, and seemed to vie with each other in the magnificence of their wedding gifts to *the bride of the Marquis de Grammont*. Why did thought wander, at the moment of receiving them, amongst the frightful spectres of the past ?

My dear mother was of the breakfast party, looking pale and serious.

As Léonce and I bent before her, to ask her benediction, she joined our hands, and blessed us in her own quiet tender manner, saying that if it were permitted to the departed to revisit earth, she had no doubt the spirit of another parent was hovering over us, with blessings as fervent as her own. This sweet flight of fancy and of hope elevated our thoughts to a higher sphere, while the affecting reminiscence, awakening thoughts of him we had lost, made us feel anew how much, even in the midst of happiness, we had still to deplore.

Sir Lucius Mac Neil, whom I had not yet greeted,

was at my side, as my mother ceased speaking, with an offering of warm and brotherly wishes for Léonce and myself. As our guests were beginning to arrive, my uncle De Carryfort led me to the saloon, the remainder of the family immediately following us. I was so happy as to observe amongst the first arrivals, my old friend Mr. O'Callaghan, and to receive from him the warmest felicitations of his kind heart.

Many other charming persons crowded round me, to offer, with an *empressement* and a grace peculiarly French, the compliments of the occasion.

The carriages were soon announced, and we were, in a few minutes, at the Ambassador's Chapel.

Our marriage had been arranged in the English fashion, but at the entrance to the chapel I found an avenue formed of young French girls, dressed in white, with chaplets on their heads, each bearing a basket of flowers, which, as I passed along, they strewed in my path.

This is an ordinary French practice, but being unexpected by me, it affected me so much, that had not my uncle, De Carryfort, been at my side, I should not have been able to preserve my composure, as the harsh contrasts of my life rushed on my memory.

Bishop L——, at that time chaplain to the embassy, awaited our arrival in the chapel, and in a few minutes Léonce and I stood together before the altar of God.

The ceremony was soon performed, when I had

the tearful felicity of being hailed by Léonce as 'his own dear wife.'

Shortly after our return to the Rue d'Anjou, we took leave of our family and friends there, and set off towards an ancient family château of Monsieur de Grammont's, near Auxerre, on the Yonne, about twenty miles south of Paris, accompanied only by Mary and a personal servant of my husband's.

As we cleared the outskirts of the city, the sun shone resplendently on the fields and foliage that sprang into view, and we bowled along in a trance of unutterable delight.

It was the anniversary of the day on which we had first met, at Mulgrave Castle, twelve years before ; and as we looked back and recalled that day, so eventful to us both, we were led to glance at the sufferings and the happiness of which it had been the fruitful source.

In doing so, my own attention was especially arrested by the effect which our family intercourse with Léonce had had on the religious opinions of so many of our circle. For although he was both an unproselyting and a tolerant Protestant, yet the depth of his information, the force of his arguments, and the moderation of his statements, brought so much inquiry into play, that to him might be traced the secession from the Romish church of at least four persons in our family, whom the truth had made free. What a trophy for him to incorporate with his family

honours, if, indeed, it may be permitted to speak of associating such a triumph with the perishing distinctions of earth !

Monsieur de Grammont and myself, now that our personal anxieties had subsided, began to feel the blessedness of union of opinion and feeling in the great and paramount concerns of religion. Léonce was no idle talker on sacred things; he felt too deeply their importance to speak of them, or even to allude to them, without reverence. He had nothing about him of what is ordinarily understood by 'religious cant.' A mere verbal, conventional, and ostentatious piety, as foreign to the sincerity and simplicity of an humble faith in divine truth, as to good sense and good taste. If religion consisted in the mere adoption of its dialect and its technicalities, it would be easy to become pious. But if 'pure and undefiled religion' is our aim, and we descend into the deep of the heart as the temple of it, we shall find that we have a daily, hourly battle to wage with ourselves, which is as humiliating as it is difficult of achievement; and in which we are conquerors only through faith in Him 'who giveth us the victory.'

French Protestantism had, at the period of which I am speaking, a peculiar character, which I hardly know how to describe faithfully. There was in it a latitude of charity, an absence of exclusiveness, and yet a fervour of zeal in its professors, which, while it laboured, like the disciples of a new faith, to establish

and extend itself, was yet so unassuming and tolerant that you at once recognised in it the spirit of Him who came not to judge, but to save. The true Christian feeling seems indeed everywhere to be that of forbearance with mere error of opinion, rather than persecution of it.

Monsieur de Grammont had been for years a sincere disciple of the Protestant faith in France, which, though countenanced at this time by the government of Charles the Tenth, and assisted by annual supplies from its treasury, was nevertheless, in various localities, 'persecuted, afflicted, and tormented.'

Léonce's absence from his native land for many years, had prevented him from lending his name and influence to its promotion. But now, as he was about to live at home, he traced out for himself extensive projects of usefulness to it, in which, feeling that we should be 'labourers together,' he promised himself the happiness of assisting its growth; for he considered the cause of Protestantism to be the cause of civil and religious liberty, the cause of morals, and the cause of truth.

In views and feelings such as these, Léonce and I were perfectly in unison; and while we hoped and cherished the belief that we were heirs together of eternal life, we deeply felt that we were but pilgrims and strangers upon earth, journeying towards a final home. As we poured out our hearts to each other

during our journey, we felt that we were entering on a new era, and a happier world; and had not the adversities of the past been written ineffaceably in our hearts, we might have forgotten the tenure on which all the felicity of earth is held. But although a chastening perception of it, mingled with our feelings and restrained our joy, we dared not repine at that tenure; for is not life itself transient as a vapour that 'appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away?' Yet the conscious eternity of our spirits inspired deathless hopes, as we discerned afar that future world, in which there 'shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.'

[The following letter by MARY, as it forms somewhat of a sequel to the foregoing tale, will not, perhaps, be wholly unacceptable to the reader.—EDITOR.]

Château de Grammont,
July 22nd, 1827.

Dear Mrs. O'Connell,

I hope, ma'am, you have not thought me negligent in being so long in writing to you the account you asked me for in your last kind letter.

I hope Sir Felix is well, though from his not arriving in time to my dear lady's wedding, I am afraid he is not. Please, give my best duty to him.

Great and happy changes here, dear Mrs. O'Connell! Our dear Miss Helen, that once was, after suffering worse than any martyr ever since her first marriage with a gentleman quite unsuitable to her, is at last married to that dear Marquis de Grammont, who ought to have been her husband from the first. As I have very little time at present, I do not intend to write a long letter, but only just to give you an idea of how our troubles have at last ended. The Count de Carryfort, after treating my dear lady, his

own niece, worse than an impostor, and only because she was poor, turned about on seeing that the marquis had offered her his hand, and actually made her his heiress. I never saw such a regular turn-about in my life. I wonder he was not ashamed of himself; but he seemed to forget himself entirely in the grandeur of the match, although the marquis was a Protestant; and on the wedding morning he presented such a magnificent present of diamonds to the bride, that I couldn't help crying at sight of them, when I was packing them up, to think how glad she would have been, when she and the dear children were starving to death, to have had but the smallest amongst them to buy bread with. But this is a strange world, Mrs. O'Connell, where the love of money makes people forget what is so far before it—the love of their neighbour. But when people forget their own flesh and blood, it is quite unnatural and monstrous! The Baron de Wallenstein, another uncle of my lady's, gave her a complete set of emeralds; and rings, and bracelets, and coronets without end, came in from all quarters. My heart swells while I write this, to think that none of these uncles and bountiful givers came to her help when she wanted it. My lady herself, dear blessed creature, cares nothing about ornaments; nor is her beauty of a kind to require them. She is more handsome now, I do assure you, than she was when she was sixteen, though she has a very sad look at times, as she always had,

you know. I had myself the pleasure of dressing her for her bridal ; and a sweet dress it was ; white and silver, as simple as hands could make it, by a French *modiste*, and a splendid gossamerlike lace veil, falling from the crown of her head over her beautiful shoulders, with a tiara of large pearls (the marquis's gift) mixed with orange blossoms. Oh, I shall never forget the sight, when I saw her and the marquis standing before the altar—both so handsome !

The day before the wedding, a party was made from the hôtel of the Count de Carryfort, to the hôtel of the marquis, in the faubourg, and I was allowed to attend my lady there. It was a most splendid day, and when our carriages arrived at the hôtel, we were received in great state. All the men-servants were in rich liveries, and so many of them, and so polite.

After we had gone over the house—(I say we, for though I did not, of course, walk into the rooms with my lady, I walked after her, and saw everything she saw)—well, as I was saying, after we had gone over the house, we came to the picture gallery, at the upper end of which was a whole length picture, with a curtain of crimson velvet before it, lined with white satin.

When it was drawn aside, what should I see, but a life-size painting of my lady, which the marquis had had taken of her, by an artist he sent to Ireland, some years since, expressly for that purpose. I

remember hearing of it at the time, and my lady had reason not to forget it, though I had quite forgotten it, till I saw the painting uncovered, and Miss Helen Mulgrave, in white muslin and myrtle blossoms, looking just as she did when I put her on that dress to go to a ball at Cork.

I was never tired of standing before it ; and it was so like her, that I almost dropped my curtsy to it when I first looked at it. My dear lord, as he now is, has an apartment fitted up in his hotel for my lady's children and their governess—five or six most pleasant rooms, overlooking one of the gardens. I thought there was no end to his kindness ; and indeed there is not. I cannot tell the half of what I have seen of his fondness for my lady, and her children, too. But I must not forget to tell you that the Jesuit Executor is dead—they say of poison. But no matter what it was ; the world is well rid of him now, and the consequences to my dear lady will be very great, as she is likely to get Master Frederic out of the college ; and all the family are likely to have their own again. Besides this, my lady will now be made, through the interest of the marquis, guardian to her son. What a beautiful thing power is, when it is used to do good ! May God long continue to my lord and lady all their possessions and their fine qualities, till they are ready for a better world ! I am sure you will say amen to that, and I must soon write finis to my letter, which is getting too long.

I have laid down my pen a bit, just to read an English Paris paper, *Galignani's*, and I learn from it, that the Jesuit and the priest, I mean the Irish parish priest, were both poisoned ; but it is thought that the Jesuit, who was in full health—while the priest was already a dying man—had no thought of dying. But the parish priest, a cunning sort of fellow, found out that the Jesuit had a design upon his life, in order to get hold of some jewels which the priest had, and would not give up to him ; and he thought he would be up with him, and secretly provided a poisoned wafer, which he contrived, by some sleight of hand, to exchange for the one which the Jesuit had got for himself. Of course, the Jesuit died in great agonies ; the priest lived an hour or two after him.

It has just come into my head, that the jewels must have been my master's, Sir William Mulgrave's. It makes my blood run cold, to think of the two wretched men, both deliberate murderers, receiving their death through the sacrament, that, according to their pretensions, was to save their souls !

But I have not yet told you anything about our beautiful Château de Grammont, where we are at present staying—that is, my lord and lady and myself, and one town servant, my lord's valet.

All the servants here are old-fashioned, and all Protestants, as my lord will have no others upon his estates, for the sake of peace and harmony in the

kitchens. They are all simple country people; and, although they are clever servants, can neither read nor write, except the housekeeper and the butler, who read the Scriptures in the housekeeper's room to them daily; and they are so fond of their lord, although they never give him his title, but call him Monsieur de Grammont, or *notre cher Monsieur*. Titles are quite out here—but I shall always call my lady the marchioness, for I like the sound of it, and she is so well entitled to it. I was always sure, from my dreams and other tokens, that she would some time or other have her due.

The château is a beautiful house, though a very ancient place, and, like our Mulgrave Castle, has haunted rooms in it.

I have such a beautiful *chambre à coucher*—that means a bedroom—with curtains, and every comfort; and it is so near to my lady's room, that I can answer her bell in a moment, when she rings. The house is very large, and has been lately fitted up for a great party, which is expected here in about a fortnight. First, there are my lady's two uncles, the count and the baron, and next Lady Mulgrave and Miss Caroline; then, Sir Lucius Mac Neil and his lady and four children, and last, though not least, the two Miss Fitzgeralds and their governess; and as every one will bring servants with them, there will be a fine house full of us, when all are assembled; besides Fanchette, who is coming to visit the ser-

vants, and Mr. O'Callaghan, to my lord. I ought to have mentioned him first, but I am sure he is too good to care for it.

But we are to have a fortnight to ourselves first, for I heard the marquis say to my lady, that till his own dear fortnight was passed, he would not receive Charles Dix himself. My lady and he walk about the park and grounds every day, and ride out together, and have their evenings to themselves, as they have caused it to be announced in the neighbourhood that they do not receive company until the arrival of their friends from Paris.

When we arrived here on the wedding-day, we were received with bands of music, and we entered the château under a triumphal arch, and my lady stepped from her carriage into the house on roses and myrtles. The butler and the housekeeper are both elderly people, and were in the service of my lord's father and mother before the revolution; and it would have done your heart good to see how they were dressed, when they stood at the door to receive us. I thought, to be sure, some of the court had got to the château before us; though, on second thoughts, I was sure none of the court of Paris dressed in their fashion. I wish I had time to describe to you, dear Mrs. O'Connell, how their silver-white hair was disposed of round their dear old wrinkled faces; the butler with a long queue, and the housekeeper with a high cushion on her head.

I am afraid I am very straggling in my account; but you must excuse me, I have been here so short a time, and my head is almost turned with happiness.

On the wedding morning, just before my lady went down to breakfast, after I had dressed her, and was standing looking at her; she came across the room to me, and with tears in her eyes, put into my hand the sweetest little pocket-book I ever saw, full of beautiful prints, and with silver clasps. Inside was a bank bill for a thousand francs, which I never saw till this morning, for I did but just open it on the day I received it, and was so taken up with the pictures, that I looked no further; so I knew nothing of the bank note, and I have not yet thanked my lady for it. I must now wait till her bell rings before I can go to her, and I am sure I shall never be able to thank her as I ought.

I hope Sir Felix will come here, and meet his many relations while they are at the château; although to be sure, it is a long journey for him; but as he was not at the wedding, my lady has written to invite him here, and she and my lord both intend to return his visit at Mulgrave Castle. I have just been to the window, to look out for them, as they have been out for several hours, and I see the chariot at a distance, driving very fast home, followed by Rover. Although they do not receive visitors, or make visits in the neighbourhood at present, I'll warrant you they

will be well acquainted with all the sick and poor people for miles round.

We have a beautiful little Protestant chapel, that is to be, erecting here on the grounds; it is but just begun, but the marquis says he means to spend all his summers here, as long as my lady likes the place. And I am sure she will like any place he likes and where he is. What a blessing for people to marry those they love! But the carriage stops at the door, and the servants are already there, to receive my lord and lady, so they will be upstairs in a moment. There it is—my bell rings, and I fly to my lady.

I remain, dear Mrs. O'Connell, hoping this will find you well, as it leaves me,

Your affectionate friend and former fellow-servant,

MARY WALTER.

P.S. Oh, my dear Mrs. O'Connell, my lady has just told me that the opposition to the Protestant chapel we are building is so great from the Roman Catholics here, that the labourers on it do their work in peril of their lives. The marquis, however, says that Frenchmen are not assassins, except under priestly influence, and that he will probe this persecution to the bottom; for he is sure of finding some wretched priest or other working up the ignorant country-people against his chapel; and if he cannot

check this persecution otherwise, he will carry the matter before the highest tribunal in France. I should not say all this to you, dear Mrs. O'Connell, if I did not believe that in your heart you are a Protestant, although, for the sake of peace and security, you conform outwardly to the Romish church. I know, at any rate, that you read the Scriptures daily. May God give us both grace to learn from their perusal the way to heaven, though it should be a narrow and a thorny road. Think of what our dear marchioness has suffered for the cause of the Bible, and let us also be steadfast, and labour to endure unto the end, that we may be saved.

MARY.

NOTES.

NOTE 10, PAGE 30.

'Whenever it may fall on your devoted head, it will sink you in endless perdition!'

ANATHEMA OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

'We extract from the Excommunication Service of the Church of Rome, the following opening paragraph of what is called a prayer (?) being the form used by the church, in pronouncing its anathema of excommunication upon any obnoxious individual, who, by secession, or any other cause, may have provoked its vengeance. The portion given is but one of nine paragraphs which the curse contains, but which our readers may probably consider sufficiently revolting to justify our omission of the remaining eight.

'By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the holy canons, and of the undefiled Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and of the heavenly virtues, angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubims and seraphims, and of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and of all the apostles and evangelists, and of the holy innocents, who, in the sight of the Holy Lamb, are found worthy to sing the new song of the Holy Martyrs, and the Holy Confessors, and all the Holy Virgins, and of all the saints, together with the holy and elect of God,—we excommunicate and anathematise him, and from the threshold of the holy church of God Almighty we sequester him, that he may be tormented, disposed of, and delivered over with Dathan and Abiram, and with those who say unto the Lord God, Depart from us, we desire

none of thy ways. And as fire is quenched with water, so let the light of him be put out for evermore!

Then follows the curse in detail.

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NOTE 11, PAGE 52.

'Thus we parted.'

THE CONFESSIONAL, AND INDULGENCES.

At a public meeting held at Reading on the 27th March, 1845, for the purpose of opposing the Maynooth Grant, the Rev. Mr. Goodhart spoke as follows:—‘He might mention as an instance of the nature of auricular confession, a case recorded by Mr. Nolan, formerly a Roman-catholic priest, but now become a convert to protestantism. That gentleman states, that he became acquainted with an intended assassination, which was divulged to him at confession, by one of five conspirators. He implored the man to desist from his intention, but without success; and it appears that the only motive which had induced him to disclose the awful machination to his confessor, was a hope that his wicked design would be hallowed by the confession of it. Mr. Nolan besought the man to mention the subject to him out of the confessional (his vows as a priest precluding him from disclosing what had taken place there), in order that he might warn the victim, and endeavour to persuade the assassins to forbear from carrying their dreadful project into execution. But the man was inflexible, and the murder was committed.’

‘In another case, a daughter administered poison to her father; but the effect was unsuccessful, and the perpetrator afterwards made a disclosure of her crime in the confessional. Subsequent circumstances showed that she had taken this step merely to obtain absolution for it. In a short time afterwards, she repeated the crime with success;

and though the priest who was called in to administer spiritual consolation to the murdered father, when in the agonies of death, was fully satisfied, from the previous confession of the daughter, that she had again administered poison to her parent, he was so far bound by the laws of the confessional, that he dared not even hint the nature of his suspicions. If he could have done so, proper medical aid might have been afforded to the dying man, and his life saved.'

These anecdotes do but illustrate what was then, and is now, passing in Ireland.

Peter Dens, in a catechetical work, for students, has this question respecting the secrecy of the confessional.

'Question. Can a case be stated in which it is lawful to break the confessional, or sacramental seal ?

Answer. It can not be stated, though the life or safety of a man or even the ruin of the state should depend upon it. Nor can the supreme Pontiff dispense with it. So that on that account, this secret of the seal is more binding than the obligation of an oath, a vow, or natural secret. And that by the positive will of God.'

The first steps in the great and glorious reformation of the sixteenth century, originated in an incident in the confessional, somewhat similar to the occurrences above related, and which we shall speak of further on.

DOCTRINE OF INDULGENCES.

'According to the doctrine of the Romish church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which are necessary towards their own justification, are deposited, together with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury.

'The keys of this treasury were committed to St. Peter, and to his successors the popes, who may open it at pleasure, and by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit to any particular person *for a sum of money*, may

convey to him either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one, in whose happiness he is interested, from the pains of purgatory. Such indulgences were first invented in the eleventh century* by Urban II., as a recompence for those who went in person upon the meritorious enterprise of conquering the Holy Land. They were afterwards granted to those who hired a soldier (as a substitute) for that purpose, and in process of time were bestowed on such as gave money for accomplishing any pious work enjoined by the Pope. Julius II. had bestowed indulgences on all who contributed towards building the church of St. Peter at Rome.

‘When Leo X. was raised to the Papal throne, he found the revenues of the Church exhausted, by the vast projects of his two ambitious predecessors, Alexander VI. and Julius II. His own temper, naturally liberal and enterprising, rendered him incapable of that severe and patient economy which the situation of his finances required, and in this emergency he had recourse, amongst other measures, to a sale of indulgences. His grant was founded on the pretence of carrying on that magnificent fabric, the church of St. Peter at Rome, which had been begun to be built by his predecessors.

‘The right of promulgating these indulgences in Germany, together with a share in the profits arising from the sale of them, was granted to Albert Elector of Mentz, and Archbishop of Magdeburg, who, as his chief agent for retailing them in Saxony, employed Tetzels, a Dominican friar, of licentious morals, but of an active spirit, and remarkable for his noisy and popular eloquence. He,

* We beg to remark here, that the keys of a treasury formed only in the eleventh century are said to have been given to St. Peter, as its first door-keeper. As St. Peter had been dead some thousand years, more or less, when the treasury was *formed*, the discrepancy creates an anachronism, which is unfavourable to the verity of St. Peter’s official dignity, in this case.—*Editor*.

assisted by the monks of his order, executed the commission with great zeal and success, but with little discretion or decency. And though by magnifying excessively the benefits of their indulgences, and by disposing of them at a very low price, they carried on for some time an extensive and lucrative traffic among the credulous and the ignorant, the extravagance of their assertions, as well as the irregularities in their conduct, came at last to give general offence.

‘The terms in which Tetzels and his associates describe the benefits of indulgences, and the necessity of purchasing them, are so extravagant, that they appear to be almost incredible.

‘‘If any man,’ said they, ‘purchase these letters of indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to its salvation. The souls confined in purgatory, for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment, and ascend into heaven.’ That the efficacy of indulgences was so great, that the most heinous sins would be remitted and expiated by them, and the criminal freed both from punishment and guilt; that this was the unspeakable gift of God, in order to reconcile men to himself; that the cross erected by the preachers of indulgences was as efficacious as the cross of Christ itself.

‘‘Lo! the heavens are open: if you enter not now, when will you enter? For twelve pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory; and are you so ungrateful, that you will not rescue your parent from torment?

‘‘If you had but one coat, you ought to strip yourself instantly, and sell it, in order to purchase such benefits!’’

The following was the form of these indulgences, or absolutions, used by Tetzels:—

‘May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee, by the merits of his most holy passion! And

I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatsoever manner they have been incurred; and then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be; even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see; and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account, and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism, so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

These documents, which have been faithfully translated from the Latin, were preserved by Seckendorf, an able writer of the times in which they were promulgated.

Dr. Jortin, in his life of Erasmus, furnishes a humorous story, also from Seckendorf, concerning the said Tetzl. He says, that when Tetzl had once picked up a vast sum at Leipsic, by the sale of indulgences, a gentleman of that city, who had no veneration for such absurdities, went to him, and asked him if he could sell him an indulgence beforehand, for a certain crime which he would not specify, but which he intended to commit. Tetzl said yes—provided they could agree upon the price. The bargain was struck, the money paid, and the absolution delivered in due form. Soon after this, the gentleman, knowing that Tetzl was going from Leipsic well loaded with cash, waylaid him, robbed him, and cudgelled him, and told him at parting, this was the crime for which he had purchased of him an absolution.

George, Duke of Saxony, a zealous friend to the court of Rome, hearing of this robbery, was at first very angry; but being informed of the whole story, he laughed heartily, and forgave the criminal.

‘The following is a glance at the *price current* of crime about 1514—or ‘the tax of the sacred Roman chancery,’ which was printed in Rome, and afterwards translated into English, under the title of—‘Rome, a great custom-house for sin.’ It was published, in order to prevent imposition. ‘A deacon guilty of murder, was absolved for twenty crowns. A bishop or abbot might assassinate for three hundred livres.

* * * * *

‘Even such shocking crimes as seldom occur in human life, and perhaps exist only in the impure imagination of a casuist or a confessor, were taxed at a very moderate rate. A layman might murder a layman, for seven and sixpence. Him that killeth his father, mother, wife, or sister, ten and sixpence. For laying violent hands on a clergyman, so it be without effusion of blood, ten and sixpence. For burning a neighbour’s house, twelve shillings. For him that forgeth the Pope’s hand, one pound seven. For a man or woman that is found hanged, that they may have Christian burial, one pound seven and sixpence.’

‘It was Martin Luther who first began to call in question the efficacy of indulgences, and to declaim against the vicious lives and false doctrines of the persons employed in promulgating them. Luther was a native of Saxony, and a friar in an Augustine convent. He soon acquired great reputation, not only for piety, but for his love of knowledge, and his unwearied application to study. He had been taught the scholastic philosophy and theology which were then in vogue, by very able masters, and wanted not penetration to comprehend all the niceties and distinctions with which they abound.’

‘But his understanding, naturally sound, and superior to everything frivolous, soon became disgusted with those subtle and uninstructional sciences; and sought for some more solid foundation of knowledge and of piety in the Holy Scriptures. Having found a copy of the Bible, which lay neglected in the library of his monastery, he abandoned all other pursuits, and devoted himself to the study of it, with such eagerness and assiduity as astonished the monks, who were little accustomed to derive their theological notions from that source. The great progress which he made in this uncommon course of study augmented so much the fame both of his sanctity and his learning, that Frederic, Elector of Saxony, having founded a university at Wittemberg on the Elbe, the place of his residence, Luther was chosen first to teach philosophy, and afterwards theology there; and discharged both offices in such a manner that he was deemed the chief ornament of that society.

‘While Luther was at the height of his reputation and authority, Tetzel began to publish indulgences in the neighbourhood of Wittemberg, and to ascribe to them the same imaginary virtues which had in other places imposed on the credulity of the people.

‘The opinions of Thomas Aquinas and the other schoolmen, on which the doctrine of indulgences was founded, had already lost much of their authority with Luther; and the Scriptures, which he began to consider as the great standard of theological truth, afforded no countenance to a practice equally subversive of faith and of morals. His warm and impetuous temper did not suffer him long to conceal such important discoveries; or to continue a silent spectator of the delusion of his countrymen. From the pulpit, in the Great Church at Wittemberg, he inveighed bitterly against the irregularities and vices of the monks who published indulgences. He ventured to examine the doctrines which they taught, and pointed out to the

people the danger of relying for salvation upon any other means than those appointed by God in his word.

'Some Wittenbergers came one day to Luther, as he was sitting in the confessional, and acknowledged to him very gross sins, for which they demanded absolution. He declined giving it, unless they submitted to the penance, and thus gave some evidence of repentance and amendment. They produced Tetzel's letters of indulgence, and demanded absolution; but he declared that he put no value upon their letters of indulgence, and denied them the absolution they demanded.

'Luther complained to the archbishop of Mentz, and to some of the bishops, of this shameful abuse of indulgences, but he found them too deeply interested in their success, to correct their abuses. His next attempt was to gain the suffrage of men of learning; but he had at first no thought of overthrowing the papal hierarchy. Meanwhile, these novelties in Luther's doctrines, which interested all Germany, excited little attention, and no alarm, in the court of Rome. Little did Leo apprehend, or Luther himself dream, that the effects of this quarrel would be so fatal to the papal see.'*

NOTE 12, PAGE 54. (See NOTE 3.)

'Human Sacrifices.'

NOTE 13, PAGE 256.

'Poison received in the sacramental wafer.'

THE POISONED 'HOST.'

'A Dominican monk, named Wigand Wirt, preaching at Frankfort, A. D., 1507, so violently assailed the doctrine of the immaculate *nature* of the Virgin Mary,

* Drawn from Robertson the historian, and Mosheim's *Ecclerastical History*.

(the favourite doctrine of the Franciscans) that he was summoned to Rome to answer for his conduct. His brethren of the Dominican order, in their convention at Wimpfen, formed a plan to aid him, and to convince the world that the Franciscan doctrine of the immaculate *nature* was false. Berne was selected for the scene of their operations. The prior, sub-prior, preacher, and steward of the Dominican cloister at Berne, undertook to get up miracles, and revelations for the occasion.

‘A simple honest rustic, by the name of John Jetzer, who had just entered upon his novitiate in the monastery, was selected as their tool. The sub-prior appeared to him one night dressed in white, and pretending to be the ghost of a friar who had been a hundred and sixty years in purgatory.

‘He wailed and entreated of Jetzer to afford him aid. Jetzer promised to do it, as far as he was able, and the next morning reported his vision to his superiors. They encouraged him to go on, and to confer freely with the ghost, if he appeared again.

‘A few nights after, the ghost made his appearance, attended by two devils, his tormentors, and thanked Jetzer for the relaxation of his sufferings, in consequence of Jetzer’s prayers, fastings, &c. He also instructed Jetzer respecting the views entertained in the other world, concerning the immaculate *nature* of the Virgin and the detention of some pontiffs and others in purgatory, for having persecuted the *deniers* of that doctrine, and promised Jetzer that Saint Barbara should appear to him, and give him further instruction.

‘Accordingly the sub-prior assumed a female garb on a succeeding night, and appeared to Jetzer. She revealed to him some parts of his secret history, which the *preacher his confessor* had drawn from him at his confessions. Jetzer was completely duped. Saint Barbara promised that the Virgin Mary should appear to him. She—on the sub-

prior personating her—did so, and assured him that she was not *naturally* free from original sin, though she was delivered from it three hours after her birth ; that it was a grievous thing to her to see that erroneous opinion spread abroad. She blamed the Franciscans much, as being the chief cause of this false belief. She also announced the destruction of the city of Berne, because the people did not expel the Franciscans, and cease from receiving a pension from the French king. She appeared repeatedly, gave Jetzer much instruction, and promised to impress on him the five wounds of Christ, which she declared were never impressed on Saint Francis, or any other person. She accordingly seized his right hand, and thrust a nail through it. This so pained him, that he became restiff under the operation, and she promised to impress the other wounds without giving him pain.

‘ The conspirators now gave him medicated drugs which stupified him, and then made the other wounds upon him while senseless. Hitherto, the sub-prior had been the principal actor ; but now, the preacher undertook to personate St. Mary, and Jetzer knew his voice ; and from this time, began to suspect the whole to be an imposition. All attempts to hoodwink him became fruitless. He was completely undeceived. They next endeavoured to bring him to join voluntarily in the plot. He was persuaded to do so. But they imposed upon him such intolerable austerities, and were detected by him in such impious and immoral conduct, that he wished to leave the monastery. They would not let him go, and were so fearful of his betraying their secret, which was now drawing crowds to their monastery, and promised them great advantage, that they determined to destroy him by poison. Jetzer, by listening at their door, got knowledge of the fact, and was so on his guard that they could not succeed, though they used a *consecrated host as the medium of the poison*. He eloped from the monastery, and divulged the whole trans-

action. The four actors in this farce were afterwards delivered over to the civil power, and burnt at the stake.' —Hottinger's *Historia Eccles.* ; also, a detailed account of the same, in Vol. i. of Ruchat's *Histoire de la Réformation de la Suisse*.

THE END.

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